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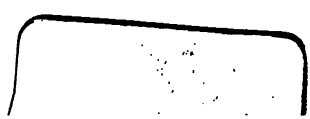

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.

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THE

MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

BEING

LECTURES

DELIVERED DURING LENT, 1852,

AT ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY.

By Twelve Clergymen of the Church of England.

WITH A PREFACE,

BY THE REV. W. R. FREMANTLE, M.A.,

RECTOR OF CLAYDON, BUCKS.

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PREFACE.

THE subject of this tenth course of Lectures being entirely future, a few remarks as to the spirit in which they should be read may not be without profit.

It must be borne in mind that the attempt to penetrate the treasure-house, where revelations of the future are stored up, exposes the Scribe, even if well instructed into the kingdom of heaven, to great difficulty. He has to trace out his way by a slow process; and if after much patient investigation some light has been thrown upon his path, he finds that it is not the easiest part of his labour to explain or expand, in other terms than those which the Holy Ghost has employed, the ideas which he has received of coming events. He is brought to the conviction that he must check his imagination, and adhere closely to the words of Scripture. Nor is this the only difficulty. He has to distinguish carefully between what is revealed and what may lawfully be gathered by inference

from what is written, and which may be profitably dwelt upon, and held in humility and prayer.

And if this be true, it applies with intense power to those who have been called and ordained of God to "preach the Word;" for it is scarcely possible to conceive that a minister of Christ's Church, who feels the responsibility of his office, will rashly covet the character of a speculator in prophetic uncertainties. However ardent his imagination, however sanguine his hopes, he cannot easily forget that he must speak as the oracles of God, and prove all things by an appeal to the word and to the testimony.

When, however, he proceeds to act by this rule, and commences his survey of the broad field of Scripture truth, he is immediately met by the undoubted fact, that a very large portion of it contains unfulfilled prophecy. Is he justified as a teacher if he withdraws from the study of it, and recommends to others the course which he has adopted for himself, by proclaiming that *some* Scripture is not profitable for doctrine or for instruction in righteousness? To those who have from time to time followed the statements made in the preceding Lectures, delivered at Bloomsbury, an answer is readily supplied. For if no other result has been produced, this at least is patent; namely, that no attempt has been made to intro-

duce a new theory into our received system of religion, or to establish a new canon of prophetic interpretation. But, on the contrary, the one aim of the preacher has been to direct the attention of the Church to certain passages of Scripture, which not only point to a coming state of righteousness and peace, but which have, or ought to have, an immediate bearing upon the life and conversation of Christians. No one can charge the Bloomsbury Lectures with being unpractical.

And if difficulties and differences of opinion are presented to our notice in sermons preached by Clergymen, entirely independent of each other, it should awaken a lively and prayerful interest in their behalf, who in real earnestness and devotion of spirit are struggling after truth in the midst of the pressing and active engagements of their parochial ministry. Whatever light their labours may have thrown upon this solemn and important subject, the experience of the last ten years has proved that the great essential articles of our faith are no way obscured by Lectures upon unfulfilled prophecy; and so far from gendering schism and disunion among brethren, strange as it may appear, the full and frequent discussion of these deep things of God has drawn together in a very close bond of fellowship, a large body of laity and of clergy, holding various shades of opinion, but united in

this one thing, to love one another, and look for, and hasten unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The leading idea of the following Lectures, is to oppose the vain hypothesis that the world can be regenerated upon human principles, and by human efforts. The course opens with a proof that the progress towards millennial perfection cannot be gradual. It is then demonstrated by contrast, that the popular notions of liberty, order, and unity, are entirely inconsistent with a state of lasting purity. The moral characteristics of Christ's reign, follow in the abasement of pride and the exaltation of meekness—the removal of the curse—the establishment of righteousness, and the unchangeable duration of it. Some glimpses of the glory that shall be are then given, in order to prepare the mind for the contemplation of the vastness of His dominion, who is set forth in the closing Lecture as the desire of all nations.

May the Spirit of Truth accompany the perusal of this Volume, and make it a seasonable word of instruction to the Church of God.

W. R. FREMANTLE.

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Each Lecture may be had separately, price 4d. each.

LECTURE I.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD BEFORE THE COMING OF CHRIST.

BY THE REV. W. W. PYM, M.A.,
RECTOR OF WILLIAN, HERTS.

LUKE XXI. 25—27.

"*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*"

IT has ever been a favourite device of Satan to mystify the truth which he cannot destroy, and to throw clouds and darkness around the light which he cannot extinguish; and, I think, it will be found

that the remark applies with much force to that important subject which is to occupy our attention this evening. I needly hardly announce, that it is *The state of the world before the coming of Christ,* as it is, doubtless, well known to this congregation. The way by which I propose to bring it under review is:

I. *To endeavour to set forth what has been, and still is, the favourite theory respecting it in the Christian Church.*

II. *Then to ascertain what the Scriptures testify respecting it,* which will bring the subject fairly under discussion; *making such application of our doctrine as the facts of the case suggest.*

And now, brethren, let our hearts be lifted up, as the heart of one man, unto Him from whom cometh all our help; and, heavenly Father, deny us not, we pray thee, the assistance which thy blessed word hath encouraged us to expect: fulfil in us at this time thy gracious promise by thy dear Son, and give, O give to us, the Holy Ghost. And do thou, enlightening Spirit, come amongst us, and with great might succour us: let thy light dawn upon our souls amidst the surrounding darkness of this world. May we find that thou art indeed very near to us: may we glorify thee by remembering thy great condescension, that thou, who art very God, equal with the Father and the

Son, hast undertaken to become our teacher: may we all know that it is our privilege to be taught of thee if we are Christ's. Yea, hast thou not said, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it?" Behold! we open our mouths wide, and we ask thee to give to us that knowledge which is needful for us, that we may profitably consider this doctrine of thy Word. According to thine office shew us things to come, yea, those things which concern the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and grant that the ministration of thy servant this night may not only be made effectual to set forth thy truth, but may by thee promote the edification of all, for Jesus, our Redeemer's sake!

I. According to the plan suggested for the consideration of our subject, we are, *first*, to endeavour to set before you, *What is the prevailing idea in the Church of Christ respectiug the condition of the world when the Lord shall come.*

The favourite theory which has long prevailed, and still is prevailing, I believe, to be of the following kind:—That as there has been, and still continues to be, a vast progress in arts and sciences (and who can deny it?), so there will be a corresponding advance in the civilization of man; and this theory seems to be founded, in some degree, upon the growing intercourse, and the facility of that

intercourse, existing between all people; that thus barbarous nations will gradually become civilized, and a growing improvement be visible on every side. But these expectations are of a yet higher character, and it is believed that the preaching of the Gospel will be so blessed that it shall win its way on every side, until nation after nation become Christianized, and "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

I believe this to be somewhat of the prevailing idea; and I trust I have not exaggerated it in the statement thus made, as truth, and not error, is my object, and I would willingly correct anything which may be found to be erroneous in it. But the supporters of these views appeal to the circumstances of our times in confirmation of them; they tell us to look to what is actually proceeding in this and in other countries; they tell us that education prevails, and we cannot deny it; they point to the increase on every side of churches, chapels, and other places of divine worship: they remind us, that the Church has awoke from her long lethargy to the importance of her high vocation, and telling of the labours of Christian missionaries in our colonies and in our other dependencies, and of the establishment of bishops, priests, and deacons, affirm that they are borne out in entertaining

the expectations which we have described. But "to the law and to the testimony, for if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Is. viii. 20.)

We proceed, therefore,

II. *To test these views by holy Scripture.*

1. Here we will consider, *What the Bible teaches will be the state of things in the* NATURAL WORLD *at that time.*

And here we are taught expressly, *that all things shall be continuing as they were from the creation of the world.* Does not Peter plainly declare that such shall be the case, by foretelling the appearance of scoffers in those days, who shall bring this forward in justification of their own unbelief? Not only have we reason to expect this from the terms of the covenant into which God entered with Noah, that father of a second world, saying, "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease;" (Gen. viii., xxii.;) but from the New Testament a voice proceeds, confirmatory of the expectation, that the course of this world shall still be going on in the same channels; that there shall be eating and drinking, buying and selling, building and planting, marrying and giving in marriage, thus perpetuating the existing state of things until the Lord do come.

Our text now necessarily comes before us. In it we find it is said, "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Our business is now to ascertain whether we are literally to understand, from these words, that there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. When we look to the wording of this passage, and consider it without reference to any other scripture, we should conclude that they were to be literally understood; and that there may be some extraordinary appearances in the heavens I would not altogether deny; signs peradventure similar to those which occurred before the overthrow of the Jewish polity in church and state. If we turn to the first chapter of Genesis, where God says, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night, *and let them be for signs*," this seems rather to favour the idea that, at the end of the age, there may be literally "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;" but if we look to the corresponding passages in St. Matthew and St.

Mark, we shall be constrained, I think, to arrive at an opposite conclusion. I call them corresponding passages, because the parable of the fig-tree is common to all. Thus in Matthew xxiv. 29 we read: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." And again, in Mark xiii. 25, you find: "And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken;" and in each of these we meet with an expression omitted by St. Luke, "The stars shall fall from heaven," which appears to me to decide the question. When it is stated that stars shall fall from heaven, what are we to understand? Whither are they to fall? Doubtless toward our earth; but will they reach it? Surely not, but, being many of them of far greater magnitude than the earth, they will come into previous collision, and form a giant circle around it. I fully agree with the great Hooker, that where a passage of Scripture will bear a literal interpretation, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst; but that must not hinder us from employing a sound discretion in endeavouring to ascertain which portions of Scripture will, and which will not, bear to be literally understood.

Possibly these extracts may be considered suf-

ficient for the purpose of explaining what I mean; but there are a few other passages to which we will briefly refer. In Isaiah xiii. 10, 13, you find precisely the same figures employed by the prophet: he says, "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." "Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger." To what does the prophet here allude? He tells us expressly in the first verse, that it is "the burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see." And again in the seventeenth verse he adds, that the Medes were the appointed instrument, or sword, in the hand of the Lord, by which these judgments should be effected. Turn we now to Isaiah xxxiv. 2, 5. "For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter." "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment." The terms there used —"my sword shall be bathed in heaven,"—stamp, I conceive, at once the figurative character of the words employed. Again, Ezekiel xxxii. 7, 8, con-

tains similar language; but in the second verse we are taught that it is the judgment which God will bring upon Egypt, of which he is speaking. In all these cases we find the same phraseology of the darkening of the sun, the moon, and the stars, in each of which, we are constrained to believe, from the context, that the terms were not designed for literal construction; and hence we are confirmed in our belief, that our text must belong not to the natural, but to the political aspect of our world when the Lord shall come.

Second. We will next enquire, *What will be the* MORAL *and* RELIGIOUS *State of our world at that time?*

1. We learn from the Scriptures, that *the earth will be still groaning and travailing in pain.* And this, I think, is sufficiently clear, because the deliverance from such a state is only cotemporaneous with "the manifestation of the Son of God," (Rom. viii.;) and this manifestation can only take place when he shall come to gather his people to himself, and make the grand separation predicted in his Word. Oh! there is something deeply affecting in this announcement, when we look around us, and note the sufferings of the subordinate creation; when we look forth upon our streets, and witness the cruelties arising from the oppression of man, by the abuse of that power with which God

has invested him. I repeat there is something deeply affecting, and yet something no less mysterious in it. That the God, whose name is Love, whose high attribute of benevolence has led to his goings forth in the works of creation, that He should permit this untold amount of suffering is hard to be understood. But we are sometimes reminded, that it is not always so; and that, in numberless cases, man pampers the creature entrusted to his care. Yes; and for what end? When he has brought that creature into its designed condition, does he continue his tender mercies? He puts an end to its existence, that it may pamper his own carnal appetite. But it is not only in our land that we discover it; it is to be found the wide world over: wherever the foot of man has trod, there oppression has been found, thence the groans of creation have ascended continually into the ears of the Lord of Hosts. But we do well to remember that God is cognizant of all these things; that He sees all and knows all; and that there is not a worm which is trodden under the proud foot of man, that God does not perceive, inasmuch as the meanest reptile that lives and moves, and has its being,—lives, and moves, and has its being in Him, just as truly as the highest potentate on his earthly throne. But he tells us that this state of things shall last until his

coming, because the times of restitution of all things will then only come, when Christ shall leave his Father's throne, as he has spoken by all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts. iii. 21.)

2. But, another circumstance revealed, in connection with this part of our subject, is, *That the tares and the wheat shall be still intermingled in the field of the world.*

Look at the state of the Church at this moment, and you see a mixture on every side. You see on every side a wide difference of character among those who are the professing people of God. You perceive this difference among those who are called Christians: some there are, who follow the Lord fully, whilst there are others who never followed that Lord at all. When we look over the whole world, we see the tares and the wheat still intermingled; and so they will continue until "the harvest," and "the harvest is the end of the world."

3. We are also further taught, *That men shall be scoffing at the idea of his appearing.* St. Peter tells us expressly, that "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." And are none in our day fulfilling this prediction to the very letter? Are there none turning this

"blessed hope" into ridicule, even "the glorious appearing of the Great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ?" Surely it is one mark of our own times, as it is foretold that it will be one sure feature of those days, in which the Lord shall come.

4. But, we have reason to believe, that the *"little flock" will still bear its distinctive character even to the end.* Our Lord described his people as a little flock in his own day, and is that character now changed? No one who fairly views the case can say that it is; and from this continuous feature of the true Church in every age, as well as from the intimation implied in our Lord's words, so it will remain until He come to give them the kingdom, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Yet we are told, that this state of things is not the state of things we are to expect, but we are to expect that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! When I consider these words, I know that they must be fulfilled; but I believe that we do greatly err in supposing that this shall be effected by any existing missionary agency, being reserved for the introduction of another dispensation of a character far differing from this present. Indeed the very term "Church" seems to intimate this fact, and to guard against such expectations. For what is its meaning? It is the calling a smaller

number out of a greater; and I humbly conceive that a new dispensation must succeed the present, when I grant that a nation may be born in a day, but not till then.

5. Yet this is not all. *Iniquity,* we are told, *shall be abounding, and the love of many shall wax cold.* "As it was in the days of Lot, even thus shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed." "And, as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." Such is the testimony of God's Word to the true character of the days of Christ's return. Where do we find in these predictions, the halcyon days of peace and holiness which are to revive our world before the Lord's appearing? When, in the days of Noah, God brought a flood of waters upon the earth, it was the result of that flood of wickedness which had already overwhelmed it. Then all flesh had so corrupted his way, that God testified of Noah, and of Noah alone; "Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." He was the only one, with his house, thought worthy of being saved in that wide-spread desolation. And verily, I never found the most zealous advocate of the prevailing expectation in the Church able to reply to this objection to their scheme, or to reconcile this plain prediction with the hopes which they so confidently hold out.

6. I now call attention to another feature of that period, which shall precede our Lord's return. *Jerusalem shall be still trodden down of the Gentiles.* "The times of the Gentiles," as our Lord has designated that period, during which we are to occupy the tents of Shem, and the desolations of Jerusalem will conclude simultaneously, as he expressly teaches in the Gospel. What has been the condition of the once holy city during the long tribulation of that people? Has it not been like their own, trodden under foot by the Gentiles? And is it not so still? But this state of things shall not alway last. "The voice of the oppressor shall cease." "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment;" "and at that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord."

And of the approach of these things, God has given signs in his Word. Psalm cii. speaks plainly to the fact, and tells us when to expect the dawn of that better day, which is to arise upon the seed of Abraham, his friend. When God's servants take pleasure in her stones, when they pity the dust thereof, then may we know that the set time to favour her has come. But we observe something more connected with this plain speaking passage of Holy Writ; "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in his glory." Now I think we cannot honestly handle this por-

tion of the Word, unless we believe that the building up of Zion, and the appearing of the Lord in glory are inseparably joined together.

7. *The suffering time of the Church will then also be coming to its end, and not till then.* St. Paul plainly teaches that this must continue to be the true Church's experience even to the end. If we look to 2 Thessalonians i. 6, 7, there we read it. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled *rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.*"

O brethren! the cross must be borne by those who follow Christ, in every age, and they who expect it to be otherwise have not counted the cost of being his disciples. He bore his cross before us, and, if we would be like him, we must look for his foot-prints in the sand of the wilderness, that we may walk in that narrow way in which he walked, being made conformable to him in suffering here, that we may be partakers of his glory which shall be revealed.

And that this suffering time is not over, while Satan, as the god of this world, is going to and fro in our earth, to maintain the interests of his kingdom, which can only be done by opposing those of the Lord and his Christ, must be self-evident.

8. Moreover, *the god of this world will be raging, because he knoweth that the time is short.* I have long felt satisfied that fallen spirits are far better acquainted with times and seasons, connected with their history and ours, than we are willing to allow. We find in Matthew viii. 29, a passage confirmatory of this belief. When our Lord appeared in the country of the Gergesenes, the evil spirits were moved with fear, and under that influence they exclaimed, "Art thou come hither to torment us *before the time?*" Hence they knew that the time of Christ's first appearing was not the time for them to be cast out of their kingdom. But, as the appointed time draws nigh, doubtless the god of this world knoweth, then, that the time is short, and he will bring all his spiritual artillery to bear against the Church of the living God, with the concentrated experience of the six thousand years which are past, during which he has been practising the same. And are all these the component parts of a millennium before the Lord's appearing? But, I forbear, for the picture is appalling which the Scriptures paint, and these moreover tell us that the harlot woman shall be "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. xvii. 6), when the Lord shall be avenged of her.

Moreover the actual state of the Church herself

is represented to be that of slumbering and sleeping until awakened by the midnight-cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him."

Third. *What* do the Scriptures teach us to expect, *will be the then* POLITICAL ASPECT OF OUR WORLD?

Here we naturally turn to the testimony of our text, and we observe that St. Luke teaches upon the subject that, "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." I need not occupy the time of this congregation by telling them, that these terms are employed in Scripture to represent the political heavens, and "the powers which be."

I have already given my reasons for believing this to be their primary meaning, though I would by no means deny that there may be some remarkable appearances in the firmament at that time. It is then added that there shall be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." That the sea and the waves are continually employed to describe "the people," must be a fact familiar to all who have made the prophetic Scriptures their study. Here therefore we have some of those features described, which

shall mark the political aspect of our world, when the Lord shall come;—a rising of the people against the authorities placed over them, the downfall of thrones and dominions, and the overthrow of existing dynasties, accompanied by distress of nations from whatever causes, with the forebodings of evil in men's hearts, who shall be looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. But, I believe, that we shall find in Daniel's prophecy "in the Scripture of truth," a further prediction of what will be found to be the then political condition of the Roman earth. I here refer to Daniel xi. 40—45, and there it is written: "And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Lybians and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with

great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

If you will allow me, I will now bring before you an exposition of this passage from the writings of one of the most eminent and laborious expounders of prophecy in our day.

"'Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.' This total overthrow of the last confederacy against Israel is the burden of many prophecies. It was prefigured in the miraculous ruin of the host of Sennacherib; and is announced in the Apocalypse as, 'the battle of the great day of God Almighty;' and by the prophet Joel, as the time when the vats shall overflow, and the vintage of wickedness shall be trodden, and multitudes shall fall in the valley of decision. Thus every part of these verses, which close the vision, when compared with other prophecies, appear to have a concentrated fulfilment in the last expedition of Gog against the land of Israel. The three separate features of Antichristian pride will then have been united in one single power. The Papacy, denoted by the wilful king, in its last hour will fill up the measure of its apostasy, and gather to itself those partial features of Antichrist, which are now

to be seen in the Mahometan delusion, and its open rejection of the Son of God. At the same time a leader will arise, the last personal head of the compound system of evil; and the heathen Antiochus, the Pope, and the Turk, contribute to supply the features of his iniquity. The wilful king, in this last stage of his power, and represented now by this leader, will gather on himself the predicted character of a king of the north, and then come down like a whirlwind on the land of Israel. Success for a time will attend his banners, so that in the words of Habakkuk, 'he will gather to himself all nations, and heap unto himself all people.' The faithful witnesses, who protest against his idolatry and blasphemy, will be persecuted with great wrath, and hunted out for destruction. The king of pride will take Jerusalem, the holy city, for the seat where he will plant his standard, and probably claim divine honours from the subject nations; a worship to be paid, in his person, to the dignity of regenerate and glorified humanity, freed from the long delusions of past ages. 'Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.' Like as the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down and fight for Mount Zion, and

for the hill thereof. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; 'defending also He will deliver it, and passing over He will preserve it.' Then will the Assyrian, the last enemy, fall upon the mountain of Israel, and the prophecy of Ezekiel on the overthrow of Gog and his multitude, after the lapse of so many ages, be at length fulfilled."*

I believe this to be a sound exposition; and, if it be so, we find what we have to expect, as the last manifestation of the powers of this world in the prophetic earth before the coming of Christ. I speak now to this congregation as unto wise men, and judge ye what I say. You have heard what I believe to be the clear, honest, scriptural testimony respecting the state of our earth in the *Natural,* in the *Moral* and *Religious,* and again, in the *Political world;* and I would simply ask this question, Do you find one single feature in any of the scriptural statements which have been brought forward, which harmonizes with the prevailing notion of the majority of Christians as to the state of the world at the coming of Christ? Verily there is scarce one feature alike, there is hardly a mark in the one that harmonizes with the other; and so far from there being such an agreement

* *The Two Later Visions of Daniel historically explained.* By the Rev. T. R. Birks, M.A. pp. 337, 338.

between the two, that we are constrained to say, "as in water face answereth to face," verily there is no concord, but almost entire disparity. And yet, notwithstanding this picture which God's word has portrayed as descriptive of the state of our world at that time, we are told that it will be altogether different, and that we are to labour to bring about such things as have been described as the prevailing expectation of the Christian Church. But it must, it will be for naught; for, if it be not in accordance with God's revealed truth, how can we expect it to succeed? It is not "labour in the Lord," and therefore must be in vain.

And now for a little moment, let us turn to a more refreshing subject, and direct our thoughts to the other parts of the creation of God, in all places of his dominion.

And here, with science at our right hand, and the book of God as our guide, we will avail ourselves of the discoveries which she has made. And we value these discoveries, and attach deservedly the highest importance to them, for they are the very handmaids of truth. And what does she unfold? She places her telescope before us, and she reveals the wonders of the starry heavens. She reveals to us worlds upon worlds before unseen, and we stand amazed alike at the *multitude* of God's handyworks, and the *magnitude* of them.

We strive to count them, and our arithmetic is outnumbered, and her wing flags in the pursuit, and, wearied in the greatness of her ways, she says, "There is no hope," and gives it up for lost. Oh! there is but One who can do these things; the Mighty One, who "spake the word and they were made, who commanded and they were created;" who "telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names!" Well may we take up the language of the Psalmist, and exclaim, "Great is our Lord and great is his power, yea, and his wisdom is infinite." But are these shining worlds each the unmoved occupant of that place in which it has been located, there to abide as a splendid fixture continually? There is a velocity of motion imparted to them which amazes us, and thus a complicated machinery, which who can perfectly unravel, save the mind that contrived the wondrous mechanism, and upholds and perpetuates the same? But in this complicated machinery do we find confusion? We do not. Any jarring of the spheres? None. Do we discover any collision of one world against another, shattering each into fragments? In no wise. He who called them first into being, still keeps the stars in their courses, and hence we find prevailing harmony in all. And why so? *Because God has given them a law, and that law they implicitly obey.* But, what effect

do these things produce upon me? I stand amazed before the revelations of science, and I feel in very deed my own littleness; yea, I sink under a sense of it, when I learn the Immensity of God, and the Innumerable Multitude of his works. But does science leave me here? Does she permit me to continue so cast down? She still encourages me to proceed, and suggests a further search into God's handiworks. True it is that I have found worlds upon worlds innumerable, when she first made her revelations to me; but now she turns the glass, and, by the power of her microscope, she reveals to me a world in an atom! And pursuing, so far as I am enabled, my research in this direction, the wonders of divine operation are continually unfolding its minutest forms, until we can follow them no longer, confessing that God's hand is still before us, though his ways are unsearchable in this world of atoms, and past finding out. But are there any jarrings here? Here is there any confusion? None: the same beauty exists: the same sweet harmony. And why? because *God hath given them a law,* even the minutest portions of his works, *and that law they implicitly obey.*

Now rise with me still higher in the scale, yea, in heart and mind let us ascend whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, and under the guidance of the Eternal Spirit and with his blessed book in our

hand, we may scale the everlasting doors, and cast ourselves in holy contemplation before the throne of the Eternal. And what is there? First and foremost we behold God Incarnate: God in our flesh. There we see what Daniel saw in vision: One, "whose garment is white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool, and whose throne is like the fiery flame." There we behold "cherubim and seraphim, who continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth." There our minds are fixed upon Him dwelling in light unapproachable to mortal man, and while lost in overwhelming wonder we call to mind, for our encouragement, that He who sitteth on his Father's throne, is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and is not ashamed to call us brethren! But when we direct our speculations around, and consider the glorious scenery about the throne of God, we see "thousand thousands ministering unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before Him!" Is there any jarring among the armies of heaven? Anything discordant here? No! it is all harmony and love; it is an atmosphere of holy concord: there is no discord among that innumerable company, *because God has given them a law, and that law they joyfully obey.* Obedience to that law is their supreme delight. But are they the mere passive spectators of that

scene, the immoveable attendants upon the Royalty of heaven? Rather are they "the flaming fires" who delight to do God's will, who are passing and repassing continually from the face of our Father which is in heaven with unspeakable rapidity to visit our earth and the inhabitants thereof, whilst they minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. And how strange must be the contrast between the scenes in which they minister!

Now, return we to our own earth, and what do we behold? A very blot in creation. The air which surrounds it is the dwelling place of Satan and his angels, "as the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." We pass through this host of the high ones which are on high, and fixing our attention upon the earth itself, we behold man lifting up his head against God in every form of pride, and of lofty imaginations, which exalt themselves against him. God in mercy has given to him the written record of his will, the testimony of his grace, and the witness of his power. He receives the boon at his hand, and, trusting to his own understanding, he analyzes the testimony; and with scepticism as his guide, he strives to talk away the reality of God's wondrous works (though for himself the record of those works is kept), and rending the warp from the woof, and the woof

from the warp, he would scatter, were he able, the disjointed portions to the winds of heaven. But while all this is going on, mark how God rebukes the madness of man. He calls upon the earth to open her mouth, and from the mounds of Babylon and the ruins of Nineveh he brings forth his witnesses, and the very rocks of Sinai respond and proclaim THAT GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH.

And are we to suppose that this state of things shall last for ever, and that God, the God of order, will permit one jarring element to remain to perpetuate eternal discord amongst his handyworks, destroying the harmony of the spheres, and creation's diapason? It cannot be, for Christ has died to redeem our world from the power of the enemy, to bring back primeval peace and holiness; and, though now his law be trampled under foot, and his Gospel rejected, to introduce the blessed time for which all creation longs, when God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. But we observe, that when there has been any great thing to be brought to pass upon our earth, which God has revealed, he has graciously given signs to mark its approach. And, my soul, has God given thee no signs of his return to redeem this world according to his word? Has he given thee no marks by which to know that his coming draweth nigh? Are none running to and fro upon earth, and is

not knowledge increasing? Is there no preaching of the Gospel as a witness? Are there no scoffers saying, Where is the promise of his coming? Are none of God's servants caring for Zion? Have there been no signs in the political heavens during the last few years, no falling of stars, no raging amongst the people? No hearts of men failing for fear, and for looking after the things that are coming upon the earth? Assuredly these things have begun to take place amongst us. And are not these some of God's own marks of the state of the world when the Lord shall come? And if we close our eyes to these things, and our ears to those who announce them, and we ourselves are unprepared for his appearing, with whom must the blame be found? I know that it may not be our privilege to escape the common lot of humanity, and to be of the favoured number of those who, being found alive at his coming, shall be changed in a moment, without passing through death, to meet the Lord in the air. I know that it may please Him, in whose hand are the issues of life, to call us at any moment from the body: this I know, and therefore that it becomes us all to be prepared habitually for that summons. And hence we say, that, as some doubtless from this congregation have been of late so called away from the living, and others also shall follow before the Lord

do come, it well becomes each one here present to lift up his heart with all humility, and say, "Lord, is it I?" But these facts are not to withdraw my mind from what is proceeding in the world around me, and when I look to the actual condition of things, I find sufficient to arrest attention; and in our own land also, the circumstances which marked the summer that is past cannot be overlooked. When I consider that temple of concord, into which the nations sent each their tributary representatives, and to which so many minds were turned, because herein they thought they found a token and a pledge of almost universal peace; I must be forgiven for doubting the soundness of these anticipations, and I ask of them now, Is it peace? If it be so, whence arises the necessity for arming our people, and fortifying our land against foreign attacks? Whence springs the need for increasing our military forces and strengthening our navy? Why the very fragile character of that temple well set forth the fragile foundation upon which the hope of a world's peace was resting, when resting upon the wisdom of man; for there is no peace for an ungodly world, until the Prince of Peace shall come and establish his kingdom of righteousness in the earth. I know that these truths are all-important, all-important when taken in connection with the great subject before us; but

great as that subject truly is, and great as may be our desire to prepare man for the coming events, no man can be the saviour of his brother; for it cost more to redeem a soul, and he must let that alone for ever.

But there is One, and that is the Eternal Spirit of the living God, who can make our labour effectual to that end; and, as we commenced our meditations by calling upon that Spirit to vouchsafe us his presence and holy teaching, so do we now conclude them by committing them into his hand.

Give then to this congregation, O God, the Holy Ghost, a large and abundant blessing; yea, we will not let thee go except thou do bless us. Fix our hearts and hopes there, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also may appear with Him in glory. Grant this, Eternal Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake, to whom with thyself and the Father we ascribe all honour and power, might, majesty, and dominion, in time and through the ages to come. AMEN.

LECTURE II.

THE LIBERTY OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

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ROMANS VIII. 21.

"*Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*"

IT is a sad picture which we have to contemplate when we are called upon to consider the state of the world before the coming of Christ. Guilt and sorrow, restlessness and vanity, meet our eye at every point. The efforts of fallen man to regenerate the world have left it—as in the case of the woman mentioned in the Gospel—nothing bettered, but rather worse; and just before that final

catastrophe which awaits it, we hear again of "distress of nations, with perplexity,"—"men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

Can we be surprised at this? The link was broken by man's sin, which connected this world with the Throne of God; and until the union be restored which then ceased there can be no peace, because there can be no holiness, in this world of ours. It is our privilege to know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has interposed to supply that which was wanted; that, as God and man in one Christ, he has connected together Deity and humanity, and has made an all-sufficient atonement, whereby this fallen world may be rescued from that ruin which was otherwise inevitable. The blessings which Jesus Christ procured at his first advent, and which he now bestows by his holy Spirit, are real blessings, but they are not yet fully developed. His believing people experience them, but the world itself is not brought into that state, that the eye of its Maker can rest upon it and pronounce everything that He sees to be "very good." We gladly, therefore, turn from the world as it is, to God's purposes revealed in the Bible concerning the world as it shall be. A heavenly and a glorious light at once bursts upon us; and we can almost hear the voice from Him that sit-

teth on the Throne, saying, "Behold, I make all things new."

Our attention is fixed upon the realities and the blessedness of the kingdom of Christ. It is to the pleasing task of contemplating this new state of things, that we are called to night. In the light of God's revealed truth we hope to see the light of Christ's coming glory. May the Spirit of God teach us; and at this time more especially, may He help us to discover that "liberty" for which the world has so long sought and sighed in vain.

It may help our enquiries if we first gather from the inspired Word,

I. WHAT THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST REALLY IS. It will be my purpose to mention a few particulars referring to one or two passages of Scripture only, out of many others, in confirmation of what I advance.

1. I observe then, that the kingdom of Christ, of which we speak, is introduced by his second coming to this earth. To see the kingdom of God come with power, is the same as to see the Son of man coming in his kingdom, as you will find by comparing the 9th chapter of St. Mark the 1st verse, with the 16th chapter of St. Matthew the 28th verse. The coming of the Son of man will introduce his kingdom. I refer also to our Lord's own testimony, when he stood before the high priest (Matt. xxvi. 64); "Hereafter shall ye

see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Now the prophet Daniel tells us, that when he shall come in the clouds of heaven it will be to receive his kingdom; thus, in the 7th chapter and at the 13th verse, we read, "I saw in the night visions; and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

2. The kingdom of Christ thus introduced will be visible and glorious upon this earth. We are taught (Dan. vii. 27), that "the greatness of the kingdom" of the Son of man shall extend "under the whole heaven;" that is to say, throughout the whole world; "and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." In the 2nd chapter of the book of the prophet Hosea and at the 18th verse, the Lord promises to break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth. By the prophet Isaiah, he engages to place salvation in Zion for Israel, his glory. And by many of the prophets he promises that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the

sea. Christ's kingdom, then, of which we speak, is not merely of a heavenly character, but will be manifested upon this earth.

3. I observe, further, that the saints of Christ —his believing people, will rule in this kingdom upon earth. In the 7th chapter of Daniel and the 27th verse we read, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Only those who are saints will be fitted for this kingdom; they must be regenerated, for, except a man be born again, he cannot see, neither can he enter the kingdom of God. They must be sanctified, for the possession of gifts, however great they may be, will form no qualification for admission: "Many shall say, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" who shall be shut out as workers of iniquity. In short, all who rule under Christ in his kingdom must have the spirit of Christ; "if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him;" those who are partakers of his spirit shall be glorified together with him.

4. But, further, in the kingdom established upon earth, there will be a restored Jewish people in whom the nations will be blessed. Refer for the truth of this to the 65th chapter of the pro-

phet Isaiah, the 17th verse: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind, but be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create, for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." The whole of the following part of the chapter shews a state of things which must have reference to this earth; and we are told at the close, that "they shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord and their offspring with them." And then, as to their being a blessing to others, I may refer to the 4th chapter of the prophet Micah, the 2nd verse, "And many nations shall come, and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." And in the 7th verse: "And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from

henceforth even for ever." There are many other features of Christ's kingdom which we might contemplate; but these it seemed necessary to mention, in order to a clear understanding of the subject that immediately engages our attention.

5. I need but add that the kingdom of Christ thus established on earth, and distinguished by these features, will necessarily be a righteous and an everlasting kingdom. "The righteous shall inherit the earth, and dwell therein for ever;" and the kingdom is spoken of as that "which cannot be moved," "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

II. We are now prepared to speak of THE LIBERTY WHICH SHALL CHARACTERIZE CHRIST'S KINGDOM. This may be viewed in three different aspects.

1. And first of all, with reference to the saints that shall rule in this kingdom. There is a liberty which by true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ they enjoy now; and this is a preparation for that glorious liberty of the children of God to which the Apostle more immediately refers in our text. There is now real freedom for those who are born of God, and brought to Jesus as their Saviour, for in them the words of our Lord are exemplified: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Jesus frees his people now, from the

curse of the law, "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus:" from the dominion of sin,—"sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace:" from the bondage of Satan, they are turned "from the power of Satan unto God," delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son: from the fear of death, for He became man, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." In addition to this glorious liberty which Christ's people have now, they enjoy the liberty of access to the throne of grace by that new and living way which Jesus hath consecrated for them, so that they can draw near to that throne with a true liberty, and have "boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus:" they have the liberty of children to plead with God as their Father; because they are sons, He sends forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts, whereby they are enabled to cry, "Abba, Father." They have the liberty of service, so that the yoke of Christ is easy and his burden light; his service is perfect freedom. They are under the law of liberty —not under that of bondage—while they are under the law of Christ; and it is not in a spirit of slav-

ish fear, as though they were afraid of punishment, but in the spirit of love and cheerful obedience, that they are enabled to do his will. At his first advent, our blessed Redeemer came to preach this glorious liberty,—to proclaim deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound,—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Under the ceremonial law the acceptable year of jubilee was ushered in by the sounding of trumpets. At this welcome sound the labourer rested from his toil,—the debtor was released from his debts,—the bond-slave returned to his family and his friends,—the mortgaged inheritance was restored to its original possessor. All this was typical of the liberty which the Gospel of Christ announces to sinners who flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them. Blessed are the people that know this joyful sound!

But the full and complete antitype of this jubilee must be sought in that kingdom of Christ of which we speak. Then it is that the children of God will have that full liberty for which they are now being fitted. The apostle calls it a "glorious liberty;" and surely when we notice how it is set forth in the Word of God, we shall say that it is indeed "glorious." Look at the Scripture testimony as it is given both in a negative and in a direct and positive manner.

In the kingdom of their Lord the children of the resurrection shall obtain liberty FROM SIN. Sin is subdued in their hearts now, but not eradicated; the leprosy which cleaves to the walls of this earthly tabernacle will never be entirely removed until it is pulled down, and returns again to the dust from whence it came. But in the kingdom of Christ there will be no traces of sin or transgression left. Jesus purposes to present his church unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. It is this that gives joy to those who are mourning under a sense of their own sin and corruption, and who are ready to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Sin mixes itself with all that I do, pollutes my purest motives, and makes unworthy of God's acceptance my best services, so that if I were dealt with for the iniquity of my holy things, I feel that I deserve his wrath, and to be shut out from his presence. But think, in connection with this, of the glorious liberty that awaits the children of God, when sin, their worst enemy now, shall no longer trouble them; when they will be able to enter into the worship of God without distraction, and will then serve Him without interruption; when no unholy thoughts will mingle themselves with their contemplations of his glory and blessed-

ness; when seeing Him as he is, they shall be perfected in his likeness. Unconverted sinners! you cannot understand the desirableness of this glorious liberty: the liberty you long for would be a liberty to go on sinning without any fear of punishment, but the liberty that the children of God desire is to be free for ever from sin. And this liberty they shall have in the kingdom of Christ.

They shall also have liberty FROM SUFFERING. While sin is in the world its history will continue to be written in lamentation, and mourning, and woe. The children of God are not exempt from the common lot of fallen man; they have their sorrows, and their sufferings and troubles, and some which are peculiar to themselves, because Satan is their special enemy, and because of the uncongeniality of the world. But these afflictions are not for ever! They may seem long whilst they are extended over a period of three score years and ten, or it may be four score years, but compared with the glory that is to follow, they are but as a moment, not worthy to be thought of, by reason of that far greater and exceeding eternal weight of glory which they are working out. The children of God may suffer now, but the time is at hand when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no

more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." (Rev. xxi. 4.)

In a congregation such as this, there must be many who are even now drinking of the bitter cup of affliction,—many who at this moment need the consolations of the Gospel. Your God meets you with the consolation you need. He would not have you look for rest in a world that is polluted with sin. He directs you onwards to that glorious rest which is provided for those who belong to Christ—a rest in their eternal home, in the kingdom of Christ their Saviour.

In that kingdom there shall be also for his saints a liberty and a freedom FROM DEATH. As respects them, death shall be swallowed up in victory; when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, this vile body shall be changed, and made like unto his glorious body. This blessing will extend to *all* his saints, for says St. Paul (1 Thess. iv. 15): "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with

them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

It gives one joy to think of the comfort which these words are intended to afford to the bereaved. They may sorrow now, but their sorrow shall be turned into joy. A day of triumph and holy rejoicing is at hand. "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." His saints will be able to sing, one day, with perfect freedom of utterance, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!" "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I would here make an observation which may serve to throw some light upon the true meaning of a portion of Scripture confessedly difficult, and oftentimes controverted. I refer to that passage in the 16th chapter of St. Matthew and the 18th verse: "And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now the word that is here translated *hell* is, properly speaking, *Hades,* the place of departed spirits. We know that this passage is almost always quoted as a promise that Satan,—who is supposed to be now in hell, but who will not be bound in his prison until the introduction of Christ's kingdom, when he shall be cast out of the earth,—shall never destroy Christ's church upon earth. But we may

well ask, "What can the gates of Hades have to do with the church upon earth? But viewing Hades as the place of departed spirits, where they remain till the resurrection, the passage is clear, and the excellence of the promise at once seen. It is a promise that the church shall not remain always in that place of intermediate rest, but shall ultimately be delivered from it by Him who 'hath the keys of Hades and of death.'" (Rev. i. 18.)—Goode's *Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*, p. 113.

But to proceed with our subject. We have distinct and positive intimations given to us in God's Word concerning the glorious liberty of the children of God. For example, they shall have the liberty of uninterrupted communion with Christ. See the promise which our blessed Lord himself has left to us for our consolation, in the 12th chapter of the Gospel of St. John, the 26th verse: "If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be;" and again at the 14th chapter: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

How precious are these words of our gracious Saviour: "Where I am, my servant shall be;" "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." Even heaven, with all its glories and blessedness, and the songs of angels and archangels which are uttered in his praise, will not satisfy the yearning heart of our Redeemer. He longs to see the travail of his soul in order to be satisfied, and desires to have all his ransomed people beholding his glory, partaking his joy, and holding sweet communion with Him as their ever-present Saviour and Friend. His desire will be fulfilled when the divine purpose is accomplished, in the consummation of the glorious liberty of the children of God.

They shall then have also the liberty of free access to the throne of God. The inspired Word tells us of the time, when there shall be no more curse, but when before the throne of God and of the Lamb his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. "I heard," says St. John, "a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. xxi. 3.) We cannot explain this passage; we know not the full glory of serving Him before his throne, neither can we describe the blessedness of having

his name on our foreheads, and of dwelling for ever in his presence. The glory connected with this liberty is too dazzling for mortal eye to behold; our minds cannot at present form any adequate conception of it: not until we get our resurrection body framed in the likeness of Christ,—not until we have been redeemed from all the consequences of sin in body, mind, and spirit,—shall we be able to conceive what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God, and how glorious is our liberty, as the children of God, in having free access to his throne.

There will be, when Christ's kingdom is established, a liberty of communication between heaven and earth. We are told that there shall be "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" and no barrier will exist between the two. "Hereafter," said our Lord to one of his disciples, "ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." In the 145th Psalm, the 11th and 12th verses, the Psalmist intimates something of what may then take place: "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom." But can we form any idea of the glory suggested

by these words?—making known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and coming as it were from the Holy of Holies in order to tell to others of the glorious majesty of his kingdom! It does not appear what this glory shall be, but certainly the Holy Spirit taught the Apostle accurately to describe it as "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

2. But we have also to look at this liberty in another aspect, namely, as it bears on the subjects of the millennial kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We have seen that as there shall be glorified saints as rulers in the kingdom of Christ, so there shall be restored Israel as a blessing to other nations. Now with reference to these of whom we may speak as the subjects of the kingdom which shall then be established, we may observe, in the first place, that their liberty will consist in a freedom from all the evils under which the earth has groaned under former rule, authority, and dominion. Who shall describe the miseries which have been inflicted or endured in the world? Who shall speak of the tyranny and despotism and cruelty which have characterized former authority? Who shall count the sighs of the oppressed, or gather together the complaints of those who have had no earthly friends, and have been delivered into the hands of the oppressor? But from all

these evils there will be an entire freedom in the kingdom of Christ; the yoke of every burden will be removed, the rod of every oppressor will be broken, the kingdom will be governed by One who shall reign in judgment, and whose rule shall be characterized by justice and righteousness. In his days there shall be abundance of peace, and blessings will abound through the wide extent of his kingdom; the captive exile will haste to be delivered, the weary will find their long sought rest, and men of every nation be blessed in Him; there will be no more oppression and no more misery on account of it.

The liberty which shall be enjoyed then will consist also in the attainment of all those blessings which have been hitherto anxiously sought, but sought, alas! in vain. Liberty! how sacred a word it is; what efforts, yea, what desperate efforts, have societies and nations sometimes made in order to seize on the blessing—to enjoy it themselves, and to hand it down uncorrupted to generations after them. But we have too frequently seen men who were boasting of its enjoyment slaves to their own lusts; we have seen them, with passion in their hearts, at enmity with each other, and ready to plunge their swords in their brothers' breasts. We have heard much of the theory of equality, but how frequently is it falsified by selfishness and

envy. While man continues a fallen creature there will be envy and strife, and where these are, there is confusion and every evil work. Political systems may be formed which lose sight of man as a fallen creature; and their advocates may speak highly in their praise, and promise many advantages as resulting from them. But all such boastings are, to use the language of an Apostle, "great swelling words of vanity." "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption." It shall not be so in the kingdom of Christ. Read the 72nd Psalm, and such like passages of Scripture, in order to see the character of the Saviour's reign. In those days "the mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people. He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor." "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." "For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." So that in Christ's kingdom will be found the substance and reality of

what men have been so long aspiring after, under the names of 'Liberty' and of 'Peace.'

You will notice further and especially, that then there will be the realization of that great truth—that true liberty is inseparably connected with righteousness and obedience to God's law. The freedom of Christ's kingdom will not be lawlessness. We read of thrones in the kingdom and of cities over which his saints are rulers. There will be no freedom from authority. His subjects will not be living without law; then, as now with his believing people, they will be "under the law to Christ." The liberty enjoyed will be that which is connected with obedience. It will not be characterized by licentiousness: every man will not do that which is right in his own eyes, but will delight to do that which is right in the sight of God. It will not be a liberty such as is talked of by communists and socialists; but brotherly love will continue, and obedience to the revealed will of Him who is universal king will be the prevailing feature of the everlasting kingdom that shall not be destroyed.

3. Again, there is a third aspect under which we have to view the glorious liberty that shall characterize the kingdom of Christ, namely, as affecting the whole creation that shall be regenerated under the Redeemer's rule. It is to this,

as many think, that the Apostle especially alludes in the text before us. Through the sin of our first parent, the creature became subject to misery, pain, and suffering; but through the redemption effected by the second Adam, the creature itself shall be delivered from bondage and corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

I will quote on this subject the words of good Mr. Simeon. He proposes to read the passage thus: "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God: (for the *creation* was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same;) in hope that the *creation* itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole *creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." He then goes on to observe: "The whole creation was reduced to a very deplorable condition by the fall of man. The *material* world underwent a most awful change: cursed was the ground for man's sake; the earth rendered barren, without continual and laborious culture, or fruitful only in briars and thorns, which, if left unrestrained, would speedily overrun it: and the atmosphere rendered the fatal source of storms, tempests, and pestilential vapours for the destruction of man. The *animal* world first sub-

jected to man's control, and innoxious in all their habits, had such a change wrought within them, that they all of various orders prey one upon another, and are more or less arrayed in hostility to man. The *rational* world partook more largely still of this fatal change; for man, universally and without exception, was despoiled of the divine image, and corrupted in all his faculties whether of mind or body, and subjected to innumerable diseases, and miseries, and death. But things shall not always continue thus. There is a time coming when God will manifest himself in a more especial manner to his own people; and it is therefore called "the manifestation of the sons of God." And then shall the sentence denounced against *the whole creation* be reversed, in order that every creature, *according to its capacity,* may partake of that universal blessedness. The *material* world will become again what it was at first, beautiful in all its parts, fertile to the utmost extent of man's necessities, and salubrious throughout every place and every clime. The *animal* world shall have all their venomous propensities removed, and the prophet's description shall be fully realized among them: "The wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and

the weaned child shall put his hand upon the cockatrice' den: they shall not hurt nor destroy throughout God's holy mountains," (Isa. xi. 6—9.) The whole *rational* world shall then be converted unto God; "for the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

I will only add, that when this blessed period shall arrive, the creature's expectation shall be fully realized, the prophetic word will be accomplished, and as Scripture abundantly proves, and as I have endeavoured in some measure to shew, Christ's millennial kingdom will be introduced.

Such, then, is the light we have been enabled to gather from God's Word in illustration of our subject. And now, Christian brethren, there are some lessons of manifest and present personal application to every one of us. We have been considering what the Bible says respecting the kingdom of Christ. Has not the thought been suggested to every mind, "*I must seek to have the kingdom of Christ within me now?*" Believers in Jesus Christ are called out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son; the future blessedness which they shall enjoy in perfection is begun in them now, so that we may say to all who belong to Christ, "The kingdom of God is within you." That kingdom, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is begun in them now;

there is already a submission to Christ as their ruler and Lord; there is already a desire to give up their wills to his, to have their pleasure such as his word approves, and to seek their chief happiness in his approbation.

Blessed are they who are thus made partakers of the grace of the spirit of Christ, conforming them to his likeness, and creating within them the mind which was also in him. Secure we this blessedness for ourselves. So shall we be fitted to enjoy the glories of Christ's kingdom; and in the experience of Christian liberty now we shall have at once the preparation and the foretaste of the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Then the second practical lesson from our subject is, that we, who profess to have experienced this liberty, should stand fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free; and, as the Apostle says, "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." To enjoy the confidence of children who can approach their Father without fear, the confidence of believers who can rest upon the all-sufficient atonement of Christ, the confidence of servants who are waiting for their coming Lord in the full expectation of his return, is our present privilege. "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." Cling to those blessed truths of the Gospel of Christ

in their simplicity, which shall enable you to enter into the full enjoyment of that peace of God which passeth all understanding. False doctrines, superstitious worship, conformity to the world, will destroy Christian confidence, and so far unfit for the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And then, thirdly and lastly, see the importance of bearing testimony to the world of the necessity for the Saviour's coming and kingdom. Let this be what we propose to ourselves to do. Let us determine to make it known that it is our settled conviction that the world will never be what it ought to be, and what many wish it to be, until He comes, whose right it is, and takes to himself his great power, and reigns as universal King. Till then, there can be no realization of man's hope, or the creature's expectation in connection with the glorious liberty of the children of God. Be it ours, then, to testify to the world that we are looking for the coming of the day of God, that we are expecting the good time when the world shall have peace and happiness, but not until Jesus himself shall come in his glory. The more we can get this thought impressed on our own minds, and the more freely we can communicate it to others, the more shall we be prepared to enter into the language of the response made to our Saviour's last intimation, "Surely I come

quickly." We too shall be able to say, "Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus."

"Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant, ere nations' birth;
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim thee King. . . .

"Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world!"

LECTURE III.

ON THE ORDER OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

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ISAIAH XXXII. 1.

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment."

FROM the fall of Adam to the present day there has been a double craving in the heart of mankind. Men have thirsted alike for order and liberty. The same hour which brought them under the bondage of corruption, let in the sore curse of anarchy and confusion. The earth has been corrupt, and filled with violence. Oppression and disorder have walked hand in hand through every highway of human society, till the Royal Preacher might well exclaim in bitterness of heart, "I have

seen all the works under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered."

The nations have groaned under this double curse in all past ages, and it weighs heavily upon them at this present hour. They turn from side to side, like men in a raging fever, but find no relief from their misery. They seek for liberty, and are terrified by the fierce hurricanes of passion that burst from the dark caverns of the human heart. They sigh for order; and soon the mailed hand of tyranny presses upon them. Oppression, after long endurance, drives them to madness; and that very madness looses the storm of human passions again. The fever of strife is followed by weariness and exhaustion, and the yoke weighs them down more heavily than before. Wherever there are no redeeming influences from above, men are like "the troubled sea, that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." They are tossed hither and thither by a perpetual flux and reflux of conflicting passions; but, after all their wearisome and fitful efforts, they never attain their proper resting place, of perfect order, knit in close and delightful union with true liberty.

The gracious design of the Gospel of Christ is to recover men out of this sad necessity of the fall,

which leaves them only a choice—and, indeed, hardly even a choice—between two sore evils. It restores order and liberty at once, by restoring the image of God in the soul of man. When sincerely embraced, the blessed consequence will invariably follow. The Son of God makes his people free, and they are free indeed. His Spirit fashions them anew in the Divine likeness, until every thought is made captive to the obedience of Christ. Man is at peace with God, and thus learns to be at peace with his brother. The countless disorders, which sin has introduced, are replaced by a sweet and blessed harmony. But the fullest triumphs of that Gospel are still to come. The stream of grace enlarges, as it flows onward, and hereafter the victory will be complete. When that blessed day shall once dawn, and the creature be freed from the bondage of corruption, the further promise is given, that a divine order shall be restored to our sinful world. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."

Our present subject is this holy and blessed order of the kingdom of Christ, which will prove to the thirsty and weary spirit of man "as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock on a weary land." May the Spirit of God

enable us to meditate with faith and hope on this feature of the promised glory.

I. The order of Christ's Kingdom will flow from one main source—the personal manifestation of the Lord Jesus, to be the visible Head of mankind, and Sovereign of the whole world.

Everywhere, in this age of revolutions, there is a deep craving for firm and righteous government. Power, enjoyed for long ages, is grievously abused, and its possessors are driven suddenly into exile and darkness. The people at large desire to be the source of authority, but through their ignorance, or the violence of their passions, the sceptre slips from their hands, or the trust is resigned to some popular favourite. Experience, however, soon proves that discontent is no pledge of wisdom, and that power may be not less open to abuse, when gained suddenly by popular caprice, than if wielded by those who are born to the inheritance of royal greatness. The experiment may be varied in a thousand forms, but the result is usually the same. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. Who can rear a perfect government, exempt from corruption and folly, fickleness and oppression, on the sandy basis of fallen and sinful humanity? How can millions of stubborn and selfish wills be governed by forbear-

ance and gentleness alone? and if a firmer yoke be needful to restrain them, how can it be imposed, unless grasped by a firmer hand than a frail child of dust, like one of themselves? This Leviathan cannot be tamed by honied words and gentle phrases. Even the spear of human despotism is shaken against him in vain; and its darts are counted as stubble, when aimed against the impenetrable scales of human pride and self-will. The world still sighs and groans for the blessing of order, but has seldom or never been able to secure it. Those lulls in the storm of passion, which are purchased from time to time by the sacrifice of liberty, are only a poor, imperfect shadow of real peace, clouded by the dark shadows, and haunted by the gloomy spectres, of coming evil.

The only true remedy for these fluctuations of misery must be the advent of a sovereign, in whom superhuman power shall be joined with heavenly wisdom and perfect goodness. When the Just One shall rule over men, ruling in the fear of God, the words of the Psalmist will at length be gloriously fulfilled: "He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds; as the tender grass, springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. A sovereign free from the disorder of evil passions, selfishness and ambition; clear-sighted to discern the real wants of

mankind, and with power to apply the needful remedies; and persevering in his love, through every discouragement from evil hearts; will alone be able to secure millennial peace, and to still the tumults and storms which sin has created in our world, into a sabbath of sweet and holy rest.

Such is the first and main feature in that kingdom which God has promised. "Behold! a king shall reign in righteousness." And who is this righteous king? Jesus of Nazareth, the Holy One of God! His challenge has been addressed to a world of transgressors: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" This King of Righteousness came unto his own people, and they received him not. He parted from them with a warning, which hid within its bosom a glorious promise: "Behold! your house is left unto you desolate. For verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The heavens have now received him once more, until the times of the restitution of all things. Then the King of Righteousness will "return, having received the kingdom." The Lord God shall then "give unto him the throne of his father David;" and "he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

This return of the Lord Jesus, the true Mel-

chizedec, will herald a reign of peace and righteousness in this fallen world. The kingdom of God will indeed come with power. "His reward will be with him, and his work before him,"—a work how excellent and glorious!—to raise up the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages, to repair the ruins of the fall, and ensure the lasting victory of holy love over sin and sorrow.

The most fatal source of disorder in our troubled world is the prevalence of selfish and evil passions in the hearts of rulers. When the fires of ambition, or habits of sensuality, have perverted the sovereign into a fiend, or degraded him into a brute, society is soon convulsed by the fatal example of triumphant wickedness. Who can tell the crime and misery which have followed the exaltation of a Pharaoh or a Sennacherib, a Nero or a Domitian, a Commodus or a Maximin, a Borgia or an Alexander VI., a Louis XV. or a Napoleon, to supreme authority over their fellow men? Disorder, whether in the form of brutish lust, or proud unscrupulous ambition, is enthroned in high places, and the infection descends from the mountain tops of power down to the meanest citizen. All the foundations of society are out of course, and every peaceful and holy spirit longs for the wings of a dove, that it may flee away from the home of violence and confusion.

But when the Lord Jesus shall assume the sceptre, how blessed will be the change from the misrule of sinful and fallen men! The eyes of all will then be fixed on a bright and glorious example of perfect goodness. From this pure fountain-head of spotless holiness, the sacred influence will diffuse itself, far and wide, through a subject universe. Innumerable spirits shall then behold, with unveiled face the glory of their Lord, and be changed as they behold, into the same image, from glory to glory. The greatest majesty and the deepest condescension, the most unstained holiness, and the tenderest grace, the largest forbearance and the most righteous severity, all crowned with the unwearied earnestness of patient love, shall then be seen in characters of light, exhibited and harmonized in the person of the King of Glory. How mighty must be the effect of such a vision, when once revealed, to still the heaving swell of tumultuous passions, and restore our sinful earth to the peace and harmony of heaven.

> At his command the uprooted hills retired
> Each to its place: they heard his voice, and went
> Obsequious; heaven its wonted face renewed,
> And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.

The triumph of order, however, in the kingdom of our Lord will not result merely from the revelation of his perfect goodness, and its attractive

power, to mould the gazer into its own likeness. Its victory will be assured by the direct exercise of righteous judgment. Sin is the one grand source of all confusion and misery. But sin will not endure the searching eye and powerful arm of this righteous King. The very tenure on which he will assume the reins of empire will be a solemn purpose to put down and destroy every form of evil that has desolated and ruined our guilty world. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." To destroy the work of the devil is the great purpose for which the Seed of the woman will appear, when he shall come the second time, without sin, unto salvation. All evil passions—lust and pride, selfishness and ambition, treachery and deceit, oppression and violence,—if they have not been already healed by the sweet balm of Gospel grace, shall be smitten by the rod of his mouth, and driven by the breath of his lips into utter darkness. The maxims of his righteous reign are thus portrayed by the Spirit of God, "A froward heart shall depart from me. I will not know a wicked person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy: him that hath a proud look and a high heart I will not suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me:

he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all evil doers from the city of the Lord."

The triumph of order will be further seen in the very fact, that Jesus is exalted to supreme glory. There can be no greater sign of confusion than that which the preacher mentions, as a sore evil under the sun; when "folly is set in great dignity, and the wise set in a low place; when servants ride upon horses, and princes walk as servants upon the earth." When Haman is high in royal favour and the gallows are prepared for the Mordecais of the land, then disorder holds its fullest carnival. The dissolute may keep their revels, but cities and empires are perplexed; and among the faithful "there is mourning, weeping, fasting, and wailing." In such days of misrule, men "look unto the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, and dimness of anguish, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof."

But when the best, the wisest, and the holiest, is also supreme in power and honour, then true order has gained its most blessed triumph. In this light we are often taught to regard the exaltation of our Saviour. It is the due reward of his

obedience, no less than his inherent and essential prerogative. Because of that wonderful grace to sinners, which led him to become obedient unto death—the death of the cross,—"therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And when the earth is to be established, and the desolate heritages are to be peopled with life and beauty, what message forms the fitting prelude for so blessed a change? "Thus saith the Holy One of Israel, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, and princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee." The visible exaltation of the Lord Jesus is to be the signal for the opening of a glorious reign of order, harmony and peace, in which might and right shall be fully reconciled, and greatness and goodness shall be perfectly made one.

II. The order of Christ's kingdom will be seen, further, in the resurrection glory of the children of God. When our Lord returns, he will bring with him all those that sleep in Jesus; and the

heirs of the fresh resurrection shall live and reign in glory with their exalted Saviour. The king himself "shall reign in righteousness," but his princes also "shall rule in judgment."

The disorder of our fallen world is nowhere more painfully manifest than in the present experience of true believers. Even in their first conversion, the gospel of peace too often brings a sword, and the saying is verified,—"a man's foes shall be they of his own household." The confusion which sin has caused, seems at first to be only increased by the presence of the divine remedy. Where all are alike corrupt and worldly, the stream sometimes will flow on smoothly for a little season. But when the truth of God breaks up the false peace of the sinner's heart, the strife and confusion appear to be deeper than ever. Religious earnestness, in the view of worldly minds, is the great disturber of social harmony, and men might live far more peaceably, if strange fancies about the soul and eternal things did not harass and distress them. When the sinner has really turned to God, the disorder seems only to be multiplied, and not removed. His inward life and his outward appetites are at variance with each other. He desires to do good, and evil is present with him. The law in his members wars against the law in his mind, and brings him into a hateful captivity

to the power of sin. The foolish things of the world are chosen to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty. The inward privileges and outward condition of the church are thus utterly at variance; nay, every member of it is at variance with himself, by a spiritual warfare in his own bosom. The quiet peace of worldly society is broken up by a new and foreign element, but the true servants of Christ are so widely scattered from each other, or so intermixed with false professors, that the higher peace of Christian union is too seldom attained. The church militant, through the struggle between the flesh and the spirit in its members, the dimness of consciences, half enlightened, the dulness and perverseness of hearts imperfectly renewed, and the abounding of religious hypocrisy, is filled with the most hateful feuds, and jarring sounds of strife and violence.

But, in the blessed hour of the first resurrection, these shadows of the night will flee away, and perfect order and union be restored among the children of God. The inward strife will cease for ever. No law in the members will war against the law of love in the happy and redeemed spirits around the throne. The body shall no longer be a clog to the free action of the soul, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on

immortality. The enemy of souls shall no longer have power to wound them with his fiery darts, or to invade the citadel of conscience with his fierce temptations, till the vexed and wounded spirit becomes a prey once more to confusion and darkness. The bondage of corruption, the anarchy of evil passions, will have ceased together; and all the followers of Christ, in perfect harmony, shall meet in their Lord's presence—a spiritual temple, orderly and beautiful, holy and divine; and the top stone shall be brought forth with songs of triumphant joy, saying, Grace, grace unto it.

A further triumph of order will be seen in the various degrees of honour and glory among the ransomed sons of God. There are some who would introduce the barren and cold conception of perfect equality into the kingdom of Christ. Because the common fountain of every blessing is the grace of God in Christ, they would infer that the dignity and the blessedness of every believer will be the same. But this view is opposed to many statements of Scripture, and to every analogy of Divine Providence. The God of order delights to vary his gifts to his creatures. The God of equity, while He maintains the sovereignty of his grace, apportions the reward to every degree of faithfulness, and even to every separate act of true Christian love. The prophet and the righteous man

has each his own proper recompence, and even the cup of cold water shall have some answering gift provided for it in the kingdom of God. The people of Christ are "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord." But how various will be their stature, from the lowly hyssop to the lofty cedar of Lebanon! They are his jewels; but how various is their beauty, in kind and in measure, from the twelve that sparkled on the breastplate of the high priest to the massive foundations and pearly gates of the heavenly city! They are members of one mystical body; but how various their honour, from the foot to the hand or the eye! They are fragrant flowers of Paradise; but their fragrance and beauty will be as various as in the countless flowers of earth. They are stars that will shine for ever, but one star differeth from another star in glory. They will form an united temple, where every stone will have its due place. No sound of hammer or axe will be heard; but, when the signal is given by the master-builder, the dovetailing will be found complete; no error or flaw will be seen in the whole building, but the whole company of the redeemed, the church of the first-born, shall be one holy temple, perfect in every part, and divinely fitted to be the dwelling-place of the King of glory.

Now the order of Christ's kingdom will be brightly displayed in the proportion observed be-

tween the faithfulness of each Christian, and the place he will fill in the coming inheritance. He who gained ten talents shall have authority over ten, and he who gained five talents, over five cities. Those who have drank most deeply from the cup of Christ's sufferings will sit nearest to their Lord in his exaltation. "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." And who shall be foremost among those princes of the better world to come? Our Lord himself has made answer, in his words on the eve of his own bitter agony. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The like eminence of the holy Apostles is implied in the last and crowning description of the future glory. "The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

How unlike the poor schemes of worldly politicians this blessed order and harmony of the kingdom of Christ, where the Son of God shall reign supreme, and the chosen companions of the Man of Sorrows in temptation and suffering shall be also the foremost in privilege and in glory! No watchword of party strife, no question of low and

selfish interests, shall there decide into whose hands the reins of authority shall be given. Where there is the highest goodness, there will be also the largest power. Whoever has excelled in the love of God, and the love of his brethren, to him the palm of superior honour will be freely given; and no envy or strife will hinder the common joy of all the redeemed in the brightness of those morning stars of the resurrection, which excel the rest in the lustre of their holy beauty. The highest in that peaceful and glorious family are only forgiven sinners, and the least and the lowest are beloved children of God. Order will have its fullest triumph; when "grace shall reign, through righteousness," in the distribution of every blessing, and those who have sown most bountifully on earth, in sufferings for Christ and in works of love, shall reap most bountifully in the kingdom of heaven.

III. The order of Christ's kingdom will be further seen in the restoration of harmony between heaven and earth.

There is a common view of divine revelation, which would make the return of Christ the signal for the utter destruction of our planet, and the dissolution or annihilation of the material universe. There are others who dissociate the promises of blessedness to our fallen world from the presence of Christ, and expect that the present dispensation

of grace will blossom out, by a gradual change, into a millennium of holiness. In this place the Scriptural reasons for a different view of the Christian hope have been repeatedly explained. The return of Christ, we firmly believe, is linked with the restoration of Israel, and the fulfilment of those promises concerning the restitution of all things, of which the theatre is plainly that earth where we now dwell. "The Redeemer will come from Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob." The nations of Israel are commanded to repent, "that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send to them Jesus Christ, who hath been already preached to them." The Saviour left them with the parting declaration,—"Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." When the rod from the stem of Jesse shall have smitten the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slain the wicked with the breath of his lips, the prophecy will be fulfilled,—"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas." When He who is the salvation of Zion cometh, and his reward shall be with him, to render to every one as his work shall be, then shall Jerusalem be "called, Sought out, a city not forsaken." When "the Lord

our God shall come, and all the saints with him," then "his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives," and it shall cleave asunder at his presence; "and the Lord shall be king over all the earth: there shall be one Lord, and his name shall be one." It is when the children of God receive their adoption, and regain their liberty, that the creature also itself, which was made subject to vanity through the sin of Adam, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The manifestation of the sons of God is to be the signal for the recovery of our world into a beauty and blessedness before unknown; and the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until the day of this great deliverance shall dawn, and the night of sin and sorrow shall flee away.

It will thus be one main excellence of this promised kingdom to restore the orderly connexion between heaven and earth, between the unseen world of spiritual being, and the visible constitution of this lower universe. At present, the thoughts of men are gross and sensual. The things of time are ever around them, and the immortal spirit is weighed down by its clay tenement, and grovels in the dust. When it strives laboriously to mount upward, and hold communion with the unseen realities of heaven, the film of sense is upon its eyes, and all appears dim and unreal. Men lose

themselves in vague aërial speculations, or settle down into a dull animal life, in which they eat and drink, buy and sell, marry and are given in marriage, without any high thoughts that reach beyond the grave. Heaven becomes to the sinner an unreal dream, and then earth itself becomes little better than a sty or a prison house. Sin has divorced the two worlds of mind and matter, of sense and spirit; so that man can neither find a satisfying portion in the world around him, nor rise into joyful communion with that wider world of spiritual being, which has retired into an awful distance from his widowed and desolate heart.

In the kingdom of Christ, revealed to our hopes in the sure word of prophecy, the connexion, so long obscured or destroyed by sin, will be fully restored. Earth, with all its rich treasures of hidden beauty, will be redeemed from its fallen estate, because heaven will at length bear rule. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom, even for ever and ever." The reign of the Just One and his chosen people is compared to the light of a morning without clouds, when it dawns upon the darkness of midnight, or to the clear sunlight after rain, that makes the pastures of the wilderness to rejoice. Heaven will stoop down to meet the wants of earth; and earth will mount upward, with holy

longing and desire, towards heaven. The heirs of the resurrection will be caught up to meet their Lord, and to sit with him in heavenly places; and the Lord shall come, with all his saints, to the world he once blessed with his sacred presence; and the mountain from which he rose and ascended on high is marked for the chosen spot to which his blessed feet shall return. "His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives." The golden chain of divine love shall be flung around this fallen planet and rebellious race, which have wandered so far from happiness and heaven. Christ shall reign over the earth, and his saints shall reign with him. The glory they shall receive in their immortal bodies and perfected spirits shall be tempered by a heavenly condescension in their intercourse with the nations in the flesh, who shall be still dwelling in their probation here below. That mysterious intercourse, which our Lord held with his disciples after the resurrection, will then be renewed, on a wider scale, between the children of the resurrection and the holy inhabitants of the millennial earth. Heaven, in all its deepest condescension of love; earth, in all its noblest aspirations after unseen and heavenly glory, will be brought into manifested union and harmony; and that feature which revolts a material age by its brightness as a fanatical delusion, or repels the

dreamy religionist by its intense reality, as low, carnal and earthly, will be found to be the true key to the contrasted mysteries of Divine Providence. It is the hope best suited to the character of man, a being formed of body and spirit; and adapted for the fullest revelation of the character of God; who dwells apart in secret and unapproachable glory, but who also holds communion with the humble and contrite spirit; who gives their beauty to the insect's wing and to the flower of the field,—

> "Who bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes
> In grains as countless as the seaside sands
> The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth."

Even to the worldly mind it should be a lesson of wisdom, that the present perfection of geography is due to astronomical science. Our knowledge of the world we live in has been gained through our knowledge of the laws of heaven. The order and safety in which ten thousand barques hourly pursue their voyage across the trackless ocean, is derived from that higher and nobler order, which science has traced out in the planetary courses, in the sun, the moon, and the stars of the sky. And never will human life, even on earth, be freed from darkness, perplexity, and sorrow, from hopeless wanderings and awful shipwrecks, till men have learned that "the heavens do rule;" and the darkness which now obscures the

ways and purposes of the Most High shall be rent asunder by the promised manifestation of the sons of God. "Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness, shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." The laws of the upper sanctuary shall begin to be revealed clearly, in their eternal beauty; and light will then dawn upon the wayworn footsteps of weary pilgrims in our lower world.

III. Another main feature of that divine order, which will characterize Messiah's kingdom, is the honour to be given to the people of Israel. The earth shall still be peopled by righteous generations, but there will be order and unity through the wide extent of the habitable globe. The land, already honoured by the footsteps of the incarnate Saviour, the race of Israel, from whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is Lord over all, blessed for ever, shall retain, in that age to come, their high prerogative, and, like the first-born of old, receive a double portion of the divine blessing. The promise, sealed to Israel on condition of their national obedience, will at length be realized, "The Lord thy God shall set thee on high above all the nations of the earth." The land which he sware to give to their fathers, flowing with milk and honey, shall be seen at length to be "the glory of

all lands," while the city in its midst receives the holy title, Jehovah Shammah. "The Lord is there." He will make the place of the soles of his feet glorious. The promise is made to Israel,—"The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The sons of men that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee, 'The City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy one of Israel.'" "They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."

One fruitful source of disorder and strife, in every past age, has been the feuds and jealousies of rival nations. False honour, like an *ignis fatuus*, has continually led them astray into the foulest crimes and the deepest misery. But in Messiah's kingdom these disputes for precedence can have no place. The palm shall be given, neither to numbers, nor art, nor military triumphs, nor superior wealth, nor wider territory; but to a land, "meted out, and trodden out," a mere province on the scale of modern empires, and to a race who have been weighed down by ages of degradation and sorrow. And to what cause will their

elevation be due? To the sovereignty of Divine grace, and to that alone. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, and choose you, because ye were more in number than all people, for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you." His love is a reason in itself, and if we strive to search deeper into the mystery, we are lost in the abysses of his unfathomable grace. We can only take up the words of the great apostle, in which he celebrates this final recovery of Israel; this proof that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

This pre-eminence of Israel, in days to come, is rejected by some Christians, as unreasonable and capricious; and by others, it is denounced as a sinful flattery to the unbelieving Jew, which is likely to nurse his pride, and thus to sink him deeper in disappointment and misery. But it is a truth repeatedly and distinctly revealed. It is the reasonable and natural counterpart to the special degradation of the Jewish people through long ages. It serves to impress the conscience more deeply with the guilt of that unbelief, which has been the barrier, so long, to their enjoyment of these high privileges and has made them lowest of the low, who might

else have been foremost in honour and blessing. It magnifies the persevering constancy of the Divine love. It reveals the sovereignty of Divine grace. It unfolds the wide far-reaching unity of God's providential government. And, besides all these practical lessons which it discloses to the humble believer, there is a further lesson which it might teach the lawless spirits of these days, if they were able and willing to receive a truth so far above the range of their dull and earthly vision. It announces to us the true law of political progress, the real source of order and union to the disturbed and troubled nations of the earth. For when is it that the long reproach of ages shall be rolled away, and Israel enter on the enjoyment of these suspended promises? It is when the spirit of supplication shall be poured upon them from on high, and they shall look upon that crucified Saviour, whom their fathers pierced, "and shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Then, and not before, shall "Israel blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit," and "Jerusalem be inhabited in her own place, even in Jerusalem." Faith in Christ is the true foundation of national honour; and every step of departure from the bold and public confession of his holy name, is a step down-

wards, towards ruin, degradation, and enduring misery.

V. But the order of the coming kingdom will be seen, further, in the visible obedience and harmonious worship of all the nations of the earth. After the overthrow of the great apostasy in the land of Israel by the visible interference of the Lord, a new economy of Providence will begin, and the outlines of it may be seen dimly revealed in the word of God. "It shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations, which come against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." "Many nations shall say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." "It shall come to pass, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." There will thus be an economy of united worship, which shall include all the nations of the earth. Its centre shall be Jerusalem, the Holy City. Its special season, the feast of tabernacles, a memorial ordinance, to remind the Jews of their wanderings in the wilderness; and fitly

enlarged, in the days of millennial peace, so as to lead back the thoughts of men, in holy gratitude, to the long ages of mankind's weary pilgrimage, and to quicken their love to that glorious Captain of their salvation who has brought back,

> "Through the world's wilderness, long-wandered man
> Safe, to eternal Paradise of rest."

The time will not allow me to enter here into further details on the constitution of this heavenly kingdom, when the Stone shall have become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. We might else dwell on the peace and harmony of the lower creatures, when the state of Paradise shall be restored, and their fierce instincts restrained by a higher law of controlling love. "The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall lay his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas." And what though science may tell us of past ages, when death already prevailed among the lower creatures; and savage monsters, now long extinct, devoured each other

in the depths of some primeval ocean, or amid the awful wastes of continents long buried in oblivion? Does not the very comparison of these ages of brute conflict with the present state of the world reveal to us, however dimly, a glorious truth—that creation, under the eyes of its Maker, and sustained by his ceaseless providence, is striving upward into a higher and holier order than it has yet attained? If these monsters of the deep, terrific in their power, have long passed away, with the continents and oceans where they fiercely preyed on each other, is there never to be a time, in this same planet, when the monstrous forms of human ambition and savage warfare shall equally disappear? Is there no augury of a glorious future, in the contrast between these weary ages of seeming desolation, of strife and death, and the aspect of a world still morally corrupt, it is true, but peopled with a nobler race, and now thronged more than ever with multitudes of immortal beings, fashioned in the image of their Maker, who still retain traces of their original greatness amidst the ruins of their fall? Yes; surely the discoveries of science in the heavens reveal to us the steadfastness of those higher laws of the third heaven of glory, whose seat is the bosom of God, and whose voice is the harmony of the whole universe. The more vague and dim decipherings of science, from the depths

of the earth and ocean, may tell us of a ceaseless progress, not to be attained by the natural powers of man, but ensured by the new creating energy of the Spirit of God, which will yet transform a world of sin and sorrow into a home of peace, harmony, and joy. And when that blessed day of glory shall dawn, and the new Sabbatism begin under the rule of the second Adam, and his bride, the wife of the Lamb, he who sitteth upon the throne will pronounce his glorious fiat, "Behold, I make all things new." He will gaze with delight on a world of order, ransomed from all the confusion and chaotic darkness of the fall; and behold, all will be very good. The triumph of divine order, leagued with true and holy liberty, shall then be complete. "For, behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be an hiding-place from the storm, a covert from the tempest; as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. The Son of God shall assume the sceptre, and discord and disorder shall flee from before his presence. "He must reign till he have put down all rule, and authority and power," that stand in the way of his righteous empire of love. "And when all things shall be

subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all!" To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. AMEN.

LECTURE IV.

THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY THE REV. J. H. STEWART, M.A.,
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ZECHARIAH XIV. 9.

"*The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.*"

WE are told that when the wise king of Israel, in reply to Jehovah's gracious words, "Ask what I shall give thee," entreated the Lord to grant him wisdom and understanding, that in addition to these excellent gifts the Lord bestowed on him "largeness of heart as the sand upon the sea shore,"—that is, the Lord gave to Solomon an expansive mind, or a mind capable of receiving grand and glorious subjects.

Such a mind, by the divine blessing, it is the proper tendency of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus

to produce. For whilst it watches over the most minute movements of the heart—not allowing even for a moment a covetous thought willingly to lodge there, it raises the soul to the most lofty conceptions; so that a mind imbued with the spirit of the Gospel has desires which no time can limit, no space can bound, and no numbers fully comprehend. It is one of these large subjects which I am requested to bring before you this evening, namely, THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM, or that blessed season when "the LORD shall be king over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and his name one,"—a subject which brings to our remembrance that glorious purpose of the Lord Jehovah, made known by St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth even in Him." Not only, you observe, save the lost sinners of mankind, but gather under one head, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, all things in heaven and earth.

Allow me to entreat your prayers for the special aid of the Holy Spirit, that, whilst treating this spiritual subject we may all be endued with that largeness of mind and heart which may enable us to receive and rejoice in the truth; to hail with glad desire and bright expectation the coming

of this blessed day. Oh, that the Lord the Spirit may thus be with us opening our lips to speak and your ears to hear, for our blessed Saviour's sake.

In considering the unity of Christ's kingdom, we are naturally led to contemplate the centre and foundation of all unity, namely the three persons of the undivided Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—three persons in one God—the one, living, and true God—the eternal, almighty, self-existent Jehovah. We are permitted by faith to see him dwelling through endless ages in that ineffable glory and incomprehensible love, which his mysterious existence in three Persons in one God enabled him to enjoy; infinitely happy in himself, before even a single portion of created being, animate or inanimate, had been formed.

Oh, my friends, what grand ideas rush upon the mind, when we contemplate this glorious God, "which was, and is, and is to come"—from all eternity "dwelling in light, which no man hath seen or can see"—"the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth."

May we, in heart, bow before him in humble adoration of his incomprehensible majesty; and whilst the angels are with one voice saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." May we, with all humility,

give praise to him, who has "loved us with an everlasting love," and has promised never to leave us or forsake us.

It was when thus dwelling through eternal ages in his own glory and perfection of beauty, that the Lord God omnipotent, the only wise God, determined to create various orders of beings, that in them he might manifest his own likeness, and might receive from them the glory due unto his name, whilst he brought them to the eternal enjoyment of himself, as the source of all true happiness, by placing them under his righteous and beneficent sceptre.

It is, my beloved friends, to this ineffable goodness that we may trace the creation of all things, but more especially the creation of angels and of men. This divine purpose was for a season interrupted by the apostacy of a portion of the angels, and by the wilful disobedience of man—an act of disobedience which involved the whole human race in the awful curse denounced upon transgression. Among other most distressing consequences which followed, this stands out among the foremost, that our first parents and their posterity instead of being, as man was before the fall, under the mild and parental government of their beneficent Creator; they were driven out from Paradise; their first-born, Cain, slew his brother Abel; and to

such a height did the wickedness of man reach, that with the exception of Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and his family, the whole human race was swept away by a deluge of waters. Noah and his family were graciously preserved in the ark the Lord had directed him to build. But notwithstanding "the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened," so that the tops of the highest mountains were covered, these immense torrents could not wash out the innate corruption and desperate wickedness of the heart of man. For in little more than a century, whilst Noah was still living, and whilst the Lord's gracious preservation of himself and his family was still fresh in the memory of his descendants, in a proud and arrogant spirit they set themselves "to build a tower whose top might reach to heaven." This arrogant attempt the Almighty was pleased to stop by confounding their language, so that they could not understand one another's speech. "Therefore was the name of that city called Babel, or confusion, because the Lord did there confound their language, and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." From that period we may date the miseries of a divided empire. For as Cain, the first born of Adam, manifested his fallen nature by slaying his brother Abel, so these divided

nations, to use the language of St. James, very soon displayed "the lusts which warred in their members, by their wars and fightings." Men rising up against their fellow men, making this earth on which the Lord had planted the garden of Eden a field of blood. For what, it may be asked, is the history of the world, but a narrative of a battle field? Tribe warring against tribe, nation against nation, empire against empire; the strong oppressing the weak; and instead of attending to the divine commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," man became hateful, and hating one another.

Such has been the course of our fallen race from the days of Noah to the present hour. Thousands upon thousands have met in hostile array; and a race, who, had they remained obedient to the command of their Creator, would soon "have encreased and multiplied, and replenished the earth," now, when nearly six thousand years have elapsed, have still much ground to be possessed; and so far are they from having laid aside their thirst for war, that at this very time it is considered to be only prudent policy to place ourselves in a posture of defence against any sudden attack from other powerful nations.

Those whom the Lord, in his rich and sovereign grace, has endued with reflecting minds

and benevolent hearts have enquired, Is it always to be thus? Is there no better hope? No bright ray disclosing a more favourable prospect? no blessed season when peace will again dwell upon earth, and the human race be "followers of God as dear children, and walk in love?"

Blessed be God, there is. My text makes known a far happier season. It declares that the Lord shall be "King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." Instead of that divided state in which the world has so long remained, the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, He who is "King of kings and Lord of lords, shall take to himself his great power and reign." "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." "Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed." This state of blessedness is made known to us in many parts of the prophetic writings.

Thus it is written in the Prophecy of Daniel.—"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast

and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (Dan. ii. 31—35.) The inspired writer, after giving the interpretation of this vision, as representing the four great Gentile monarchies, then predicts: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Dan. ii. 44.) This remarkable prophecy is confirmed by another vision of the prophet Daniel: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." (Dan. vii. 27.)

In these passages of the inspired Word of God, we have a striking confirmation of the event predicted in our text. The stone that was cut out without hands, or a power brought into existence without human instrumentality,—this power, small at first, smote the image and brake it in pieces, or put an entire end to all previous kingdoms, and became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth; or the Lord became, as our text declares, "King over all the earth. For in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one."

It may be observed, that in other parts of the sacred Scriptures, the same symbol of a stone is applied to our blessed Lord. He is said to be "a tried stone, a precious corner stone." But without dwelling upon this symbol, we may rejoice in the animated declaration of the prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness." Who can this be, but the Lord Jesus Christ, even Him who "of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." He is the King of whom all the prophets and Moses did say should come, the sceptre of whose kingdom is a right sceptre, to whom

"every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that he is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Without referring, therefore, to any further Scriptures, in proof of the text, that the Lord shall be "King over all the earth, in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one," permit me to mention some of the properties of the unity of this kingdom. For it is these properties that give to his kingdom those rays of glory which cause in all who are acquainted with it, an earnest desire that our daily prayer may be soon fulfilled—"Thy kingdom come;" and that "the voice may be heard as of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

As the first property then of this unity, I would mention UNITY IN WORSHIP or as foretold by the prophet Malachi: "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered in my name, and a pure offering, for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts."

I notice this property—unity in worship, first, on account of the important place it holds in the Word of God. It forms the principal subject of the second commandment, or as another scripture

directs, "Thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another." From the earliest ages we see this to be the grand controversy, who shall be worshipped. We see also Satan, the God of this world, tempting our blessed Saviour with the offer of all its riches, if he would fall down and worship him, and we know that heathen nations have worshipped devils; and even the most learned among them, the polite Athenians, had an altar to an unknown god. And although all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ do at present offer their homage to the one true and living God, yet the diversity in their modes of worship and in various circumstantials connected with it are so numerous, that those diversities may be said to be among the principal causes of the divisions among the people of God. In contrast to this worship of idols, and to the endless disputes about forms and ceremonies, at that happy period when the Lord is King over all the earth, it is written, "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name."

I have no doubt, my beloved friends, but that you who habitually attend this church have frequently had your hearts warmed and your spirits cheered when you were united with your fellow-

worshippers in singing the praises of the Lord, or when you have joined with others in that animating hymn,

> "Let the Indian, let the negro,
> Let the rude barbarian see
> That divine and glorious conquest
> Once obtained on Calvary.
> Let the Gospel
> Loud resound from pole to pole."

But what will be the joy of your hearts when the charge shall be given, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory." Surely the heart may well expand in anticipation of that day—may well, by faith, realize that blessed season hen one song shall employ all nations,—when "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" shall resound from hill to dale, from mountain to mountain, from the golden sands of Africa to the frozen regions of North America,—when either India shall pour forth her worshippers, and when Jew and Gentile, then "one fold under one shepherd," shall fill the courts of heaven with their praises, and as with one voice shall say, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous

things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory, Amen and Amen."

The mention of this happy period of universal worship leads to the notice of another essential property of the unity of our Lord's kingdom, namely, UNIVERSAL PEACE.

I need not interrupt the happy feelings which may have arisen in your hearts whilst you were anticipating the delight of the Lord's faithful people; when the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," shall fill the lips of the inhabitants of the whole earth, by setting before you the present state of mankind,—a state in which, if war does not actually prevail, can only be called an armistice.

For as if to shew that man was not yet the friend of man in the Great Exhibition of the Works of Art of All Nations, which was planned to promote universal good-will, amongst the various productions of human skill which were designed to encrease our domestic comforts, or to add not only to the conveniencies, but to the ornaments and embellishments of social life, there was a large display of fire-arms and other weapons used in war; manifesting, alas! that the happy period was not yet arrived when men "shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against

nation, neither shall they learn war any more." In contrast to this state of national hostility, and what is still worse, intestine warfare and popular outbreaks, when there shall be one Lord, and his name one, the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest: peace on earth, and good will to man," shall be fulfilled. For He who has made peace between God and man by the blood of his Cross shall, by the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, "come down like rain upon the mown grass as showers that water the earth; then shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." "The envy of Ephraim shall depart. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." "The Lord will take the stick of Ephraim, and put them with the stick of Judah, and they shall be one stick in his hand." And as it is beautifully expressed by the prophet Isaiah: "I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, nor destruction within thy border; but thou shall call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

Another very delightful part of this unity in the Lord's kingdom will be THE LOVE THAT WILL THEN UNIVERSALLY PREVAIL.

You will recollect that this was the new commandment our Lord gave to his disciples, "That

ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." This was to be the test of their discipleship to the world at large. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another." This commandment was carried out to a great extent by the first Christians, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." This blessed state was only for a short season; strifes and divisions soon sprang up. One said, "I am of Paul; another, I of Apollos; another, I of Cephas." Errors arose both in doctrine and practice. "Brother went to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers;" and at times so sharp have been their controversies, that instead of the men of the world saying, as was said in the days of primitive Christianity, See how these Christians love, it might almost be said, See how these Christians hate. What "debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults," have not the spirit of party and narrow-minded sectarianism produced; so much so that the Holy Spirit has been greatly grieved, and the glorious Gospel of the Son of God lost much of its power. How soothing it is to the heart in such circumstances to look forward to the happy period

when the prayer offered by our Lord previous to his suffering on his Cross shall be fulfilled: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." For it is when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, and his name one, that this prayer will receive its accomplishment. For then the causes of difference will be annihilated, and those graces which attract the heart will be in full exercise; for then "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea," and thus ignorance of the truth and hastily-formed prejudices, the fertile sources of strife and debate, shall be no more. A willing submission of his subjects to the Lord's righteous sceptre will produce a prompt attention to the apostolic precept, "forbearing with one another in love," whilst the abounding of that charity which "suffereth long and is kind," will tend to promote a spirit of universal brotherly love. For it is as Christians bear the image of their divine Lord—even of Him who is love embodied—that they become attractive. Love begets love; and as conformity to the Lord Jesus encreases, so will charity abound.

But I pass to another essential property of the

unity of the kingdom of Christ, and that is UNIVERSAL HOLINESS. For thus it is written: "In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD: and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar: yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts." The expression, "Upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD," has a reference to the mitre of the High Priest, upon which these words were to be inscribed, and which was always to be upon his forehead, that wherever he came his holy forehead might proclaim holiness to the Lord. Now when He who shall be King over all the earth shall sway his righteous sceptre, this sacred inscription on the mitre of the High Priest shall be written, as it were, upon the most ordinary utensils,—the bells of the horses and the pots that are in daily use, not only fulfilling another prophecy regarding Tyre, in which it is said, "Her merchandize and her store shall be holiness to the Lord;" but bringing into exercise that scriptural direction: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "Let holiness be the law of the house." Let the most ordinary employments be as becomes those of whom it is written, "Thy people also shall be all righteous, and an highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of

holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isaiah xxxv. 8.)

One more property of this unity of the kingdom which will then be visible—and it is the last I shall mention—is THE UNIVERSAL HAPPINESS of the subjects of the King. "Behold, says the Lord, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice in that which I create, for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." For as the prophet Isaiah predicts: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

As a pleasing proof of this general joy, we refer you to the prophet Zechariah, where it is written: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

Conceive, my friends, the general spirit of har-

mony and mutual confidence, founded on a holy walk and conversation, which must then subsist, when the parents would allow their children to mix thus indiscriminately with the children of their neighbours, and feel that they were not only secure from danger from such an association, but their grandsires taking pleasure in beholding their little ones thus amusing themselves.

I need not say that no prudent parent would adopt such a course in the present state of society. Would you, my friends, like to send your children into the open streets to be the companions of any children they might casually meet there? No, you would say; I will cheerfully assist in using all scriptural means to restore the youth whose parents have led them into sinful paths, but these are not the companions I will select for my own dear children; and these are they whom they may probably meet in the streets.

You observe, my friends, the pleasing contrast that will arise when the Lord is King over all the earth. Instead of that necessary caution which now dwells in the breast of every prudent parent, —in that day "the old men and old women," even those who "for very age were leaning upon their staffs," and who had all the wisdom which their long experience had given them, will be delighted to see their grandchildren enjoying themselves

with the boys and girls whom they usually meet in the public streets, assured that they can meet with none by whose society they will be injured, but that those who may be playing there will resemble those pious children of Judah who met our Lord when he came into the temple, singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

May we not then well adopt the language of the inspired Psalmist, and looking forward to the establishment of this universal kingdom, say, "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord: yea, blessed are the people that are in such a case." Assuredly we may, and with some of the fire caught from one of our modern Christian poets, repeat his well-known lines:

> "Oh! scenes surpassing fable, and yet true
> Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see,
> Tho' but in distant prospect, and not feel
> His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?"

Instead, however, of dwelling further upon a theme to which, to do justice, not even an angel's lips would suffice, I hasten to bring this spiritual subject to a practical conclusion.

And first I would say to those who have not yet set down their names decidedly on the Lord's side, make no delay, but at once yield up yourselves, body, soul, and spirit, to this coming King. We

verily believe that the angel seen in vision by St. John flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come," has gone forth; that is to say, the Lord is now sending forth his messengers for the last time ere He will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. These messengers are saying, "Now is the accepted time! now is the day of salvation! The king has prepared his feast; his oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come then to the marriage: whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely." The invitation at this moment is full and free; none are excluded but those who exclude themselves. The word is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Oh, then, my beloved friends, take the counsel the Almighty God gives to those who oppose his cause: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." "Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings;

be instructed, ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath be kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him." What are all the shakings of the nations, the sudden outbreaks, the popular commotions, the despotic decrees, of which we now hear? what are they all, my friends, but the precursors of that voice which says, "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments?"

Oh, then, escape for your life; tarry not till to-morrow's dawn, for you know not what a day may bring forth; but ere you retire to your rest this night, surrender up your heart to this "King of kings and Lord of lords." He will soon be King over all the earth, and then the cry will be too late. For then he will say, "Because I called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." Now, then, seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him whilst he is near. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Next, I would say to those who have yielded themselves to the King, and who are now his willing subjects, let the contemplation of the establishment of this universal kingdom lead to devout adoration, and humble and hearty thanksgiving to God the Father and his well-beloved Son. For what a glorious prospect opens to your view:—the full establishment of a kingdom, in which all the nations which are then left on the earth shall come and worship the King, the Lord of Hosts. All of them, as with one heart and voice, giving praise and honour to his name. A kingdom also in which there shall be universal peace, universal love, universal holiness, and universal happiness. Aye, and more than this; for, that I might keep within the bounds my text marks out, I have dwelt only upon the unity of the kingdom which shall be established on earth; but the Holy Scriptures reveal a far, far more extended empire. As I mentioned at the commencement of my discourse, it is the purpose of the Lord Jehovah, in the dispensation of the fulness of times to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him; to bind together as in one band of everlasting love, the elect angels who have kept their first estate, and the redeemed sinners of mankind; making this the reward of the sufferings of his well-beloved Son, that he shall be

head over all, confirm the angels in their blessed abode, and place those redeemed sinners, whom he has bought with his precious blood, at his right hand,—jewels in his crown, trophies of his victory, and unfading memorials of his ineffable love.

Oh, my dear friends, when we think upon this union of angels and men before the throne; by faith see the redeemed with bodies fashioned like to his glorious body, with countenances beaming with joy and gladness, hear their melodious songs and endless Hallelujahs; and then revert to the council of the ever-blessed God, and his only begotten Son, and the eternal Spirit, planning this glorious kingdom; and see the Lord Jesus Christ carrying this plan into effect by shedding his precious blood for our sins, and sending his Holy Spirit into the hearts of his people; we readily adopt the animating language of Isaiah: "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and glorified himself in Israel." Yes; not only in Israel, but in a "great multitude whom no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues;" and beyond this, in ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, who with one voice are saying,

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." When this glorious prospect fills the eye, this is the inmost desire of our hearts, that "every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, may, as with one voice, give honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." And that every individual now present may join in this ascription of praise, and throughout eternity partake of the blessedness of this kingdom, and of those pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore.

Now to God the Father, &c.

LECTURE V.

THE ABASEMENT OF PRIDE IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY THE REV. W. BROCK, M.A.,
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ISAIAH II. 12, 17.

"*For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.*"

MALACHI IV. 1.

"*For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*"

IT has ever been the purpose of God to stain the

pride of man, and to weaken the strength of the mighty. In all his dealings with mankind from the beginning, He has been mindful of this purpose, He has accomplished it even until now, and He will carry it on until the end.

When, for instance, man had corrupted his way upon the earth, and God determined to preserve unto himself a remnant in the midst of the universal apostasy, when he chose a special people unto himself, to be the guardians of his truth and to be instruments in his hands for carrying out his plan of mercy to the Church, and of blessing to the world, He passed by the mighty monarchies of the earth; He chose neither Egypt, nor Assyria, nor "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms;" He overlooked the might, and the majesty, and the multitudes of these proud dynasties; and it pleased him to select "the fewest of all people," and to place his name and his glory in Jerusalem. "In Jewry is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion." (Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2).

We see precisely the same principle exemplified in the *Christian dispensation.* In the birth, the life, and the death of the Messiah, we behold the abasement of all human pride. From the manger at Bethlehem, to his cross on Calvary, Christ taught us one continued lesson of humility, for "he made

himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Just so in the selection which he made of his ministers for the first propagation of the Christian faith. He went not to the schools of the learned, or to the colleges of the scribes; but He called the poor fishermen of Galilee, and by means of "unlearned and ignorant men," He proclaimed his gospel over all the earth. "I, if I be lifted up," he said, "will draw all men unto me;" and thus by the despised doctrine of the cross, did his despised followers turn the world upside down—superseding the proud sacerdotalism of the Pharisees —overthrowing the idolatry of heathendom—surmounting the opposition of the mighty, and "bringing to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

And so it is still: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," are the selected instruments for the accomplishment of Christ's gracious work. It is God's purpose, and it is God's plan to hide pride from his creatures, by the manner in which he brings salvation into their hearts. It is not to human *talent*, or to human *eloquence*, or to human *authority*, that the God of

all grace will be beholden for the conveyance of his blessings, and for bringing men captive to the obedience of the faith. We dare not attempt to tie down the Almighty to time and place, and to a particularly constituted ministry. No; God will have all the glory of his own work, and he will do that work in a way that will bring down the pride of man. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.) It was the doctrine of the cross—free grace and free justification—which, under God, accomplished the Reformation, and rescued Christendom from the darkness and slavery of Rome; and it is by these same doctrines faithfully preached, that Christ still carries on his work, and adds daily to the Church such as shall be saved. The preachers of these doctrines may be despised as heretofore; and, as the end draweth nigh, they may still more and more be with their flocks "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." They may not commend themselves to the great wits and intellects of the age, and their speech and their preaching may not be "with enticing words of man's wisdom." It may not be charged to the full with "Church principles," and "the sacramental system:" it may not repeat the Shibboleths of a party, nor reiterate the exclusive cry, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the

temple of the Lord, are these!" but if it be full of Christ in all his offices, as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession;" if it set HIM forth as "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" then, it is the message which God has promised to bless, and though a stumbling-block to the ritualist, and foolishness to the sophists and disputers of the world, it will prove the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. For so hath God ordained, that by that which man despises as contemptible, and through him whom the world has crucified with scorn, he will save his people from their sins, and bring many sons unto glory. He hath chosen out for himself "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are, *that no flesh should glory in his presence.*" (1 Cor. i. 27—29.) So it is, brethren, in the Kingdom of Grace; and thus also shall it be in the Kingdom of Glory. Pride shall not enter there. "For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low: and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness

of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

And this brings us to the subject for our consideration this evening: "THE ABASEMENT OF PRIDE IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM."

In treating it, we may consider,—

I. FIRST, AND VERY BRIEFLY, THE NATURE OF PRIDE.

II. SOME OF ITS MANIFESTATIONS.

III. ITS ABASEMENT IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

And may God the Holy Ghost, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, be with us now! May He guide, and bless, and humble us!

I. In the first place, let us consider briefly THE NATURE OF PRIDE. What is it?

1. *It is the one great enslaving sin of our corrupt nature, and the great opposing sin of our renewed one.* It reigns without resistance in our unconverted state, and the infection of it doth remain, yea, even in them that are regenerated. As it was the beginning of sin, so it lingers to the last. It hangs about us, so to speak, in all we think or do. It harasses us, entangles and tempts us until the end.

2. And as it is the chief sin of our nature, so it is of *universal extent.* There are some sins to

which one man is more naturally inclined than another; but pride is a sin to which we all tend alike. The beginning of pride is when one departeth from God, and his heart is turned away from his Maker. And this is a charge of universal application. For either a man is proud of what he is, or of what he has, or what he has not. "Some are proud of their learning, and some of their ignorance: some are proud of their intellect, and some of their stupidity: some are proud of their titles and high rank and their influence, and some are proud to lay them all aside: some are proud of their religion, and some of having none: some are proud of their profligacy, and some of their morality: some are proud of their boasting, and some of their depreciation of themselves. The most humble men, even those who have been deeply taught by the Holy Ghost (and none are truly humbled without his holy anointing), not only find pride in their humility, but oftentimes they find that they have to contend with the pride *of* their humility."*

3. As humility is the offspring of a divinely-taught self-knowledge, so pride is *the daughter of spiritual ignorance.* It originates in a wrong opinion of ourselves—in a vain, an imaginary, a false idea which we form of our merits, of our attainments, our abilities, our possessions, or the like.

* J. H. Evans.

Now the Scripture lays the axe at the root of all human pride by lowering the estimate that we are apt to form of ourselves. For what saith the Apostle? "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." (Gal. vi. 3.) And as to a man's attainments, what saith the same Apostle? "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." (1 Cor. viii. 1, 2.) Knowledge without love is utterly without value, and without the counterbalance of humility it degenerates into pride. And so again, in writing to the Romans, he says that *faith*, which is the gift of God, should enter into every estimate that is formed of human character: for it is by faith that a man becomes related to God, and without faith it is impossible to please him. "For I say through the grace that is given unto me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*" (Rom. xii. 3.)

II. We may now proceed to consider, in the second place, some of the MANIFESTATIONS OF THE PRIDE OF MAN. How does it shew itself?

1. There is *the pride of unbelief*. It is this that is at the root of every other kind of pride; for if

men really believed in God, they could make their boast of nothing else but of him. A view of the glory of God and of the sin of man, as developed in the cross of Christ, would throw everything that man is apt to glory in into the shade. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in the Lord." The pride of infidelity and of unbelief is intolerable in the sight of God. It is making light of his gospel, and despising that which his wisdom and love have designed for our benefit. It is as much as saying that we are wiser than God, and that we can do without that which he has provided for our safety. It is giving God the lie, by refusing to give credit to the record which he has testified of his Son. It is placing God in a position in which we could not dare to place one of our fellow-creatures, and treating the Almighty as we would not treat a man. In this light does St. John put the matter in his first epistle. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he has testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." (1 John v. 9, 10.)

2. Nearly allied unto the pride of unbelief is *the pride of self-righteousness*. This is the sin of all unbelievers: "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." This is pride of the most odious character. It is the rejection of the robe of righteousness and of the garments of salvation, which Christ by his merits hath prepared and provided for us, and it is clothing ourselves with our own righteousnesses, which "are as filthy rags," and appearing before God in them, and presuming to think that they will do as well for our justification, as Christ who is "the Lord our righteousness." This was the sin of Cain, and it led to the first murder that stained the world with blood. Turn to the fourth chapter of Genesis, and you find there that "in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he ALSO brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." (Gen. iv. 3—5. Here, my brethren, is the first specimen of a proud and deistical worshipper. Behold, in this case, self-righteousness approaching God with-

out a mediator, and sowing the seeds of murder. Want of faith was the first sin of Cain. Want of faith drove him from God, and then set him in envy and hatred against his brother, and lifted his hand against his brother's life till he had taken it away, and till his brother's blood cried against him from the ground.

3. Then there is *the pride of birth.* Some men are proud of their rank and ancestry: and yet what is it to be born of Adam? What is descent from a long line of noble ancestors, but descent from one sinner after another? To be born of God, brethren, confers a higher title, and is a greater nobility, and secures for us a more enduring inheritance, than to be descended from distinguished parentage, and to be heir to the richest earthly estate. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. i. 3.) Surely they of whom these words are true have a higher relationship and a more glorious birthright than if they were descended from potentates and princes; for they are the children of God; and if children, then "heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." On the other hand, to be proud of

our origin, and to look down with superciliousness upon our fellow-creatures, is a forgetfulness of the Almighty, who hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and who oftentimes "poureth contempt upon princes, while he taketh up the needy out of the dust, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people."

4. There is *the pride of wealth and grandeur.* Such was the pride of that monarch of Babylon, when he walked in the palace of his kingdom, and when, rejoicing in the pomp and splendour by which he was surrounded, he spake and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" And how was this pride met? How did the God of heaven stain it? "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee." (Dan. iv. 30, 31.)

And even God's own people are not safe from the inroards of this kind of pride; for exactly similar was the pride of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when the ambassadors from Babylon came to visit him after his recovery from sickness. "God left him" for a moment "to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." His own strength

proved to be his overthrow. He fell, and his fall became his safety. God overruled his fall to his learning more effectually who alone could hold him up, and he "humbled himself for the pride of his heart." "What have they seen in thine house?" said a wise reprover upon an obedient ear: "And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewn them. And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord."*

Thus does God teach us the emptiness of human things. Thus does he shew us that the grandeur of the world is vanity and vexation of spirit. Thus does he warn us off from the shoals of worldliness and from the idolatry of wealth. Thus does he teach us to take care how we pride ourselves on our costly furniture, our pleasant pictures, our luxuries, our skill and industry, or on any of the works of man's device, for the Lord of Hosts hath purposed it to stain the pride of all earthly glory; and "the world passeth away and the fashion of

* 2 Kings xx. 12—19. 2 Chron. xxxii. 24—31. Prov. xxv. 11, 12.

it: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

5. Then there is *the pride of human intellect;* by means of which men often employ the talents which God has given them in denying his providence, attacking his word, and vilifying his Gospel. They make an idol of their mind, instead of adoring the God who formed it. Vainly puffed up with the sense of their own importance, instead of being humbled with the humility of all true science, "they speak loftily against the Most High. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue goeth through the world." Wise in their own conceit, they make a boast of believing nothing that they cannot understand, and thus they deny all the mysteries of our most holy faith, and sap the foundation of the Christian religion. This pride of intellect is one of the peculiar sins of the men of this generation. "Glorious prospect!" they exclaim. "*Mind* is now on the ascendant! Intellect has now come of age; and having attained its long-deferred majority, it is going forth in the ripeness and freedom of its manhood to do battle with evil, and ignorance, and misrule, assured of returning, ere long, laden with the spoils of victory—these spoils a regenerated world."* And

* *Man: his Religion and his World.* By H. Bonar. A well-timed and admirable book.

yet even with them there are great misgivings. Unconsciously and unwillingly they bear their testimony to the truth of that divine revelation which they despise. For their hearts do often "fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Has not one of their own poets said, "Knowledge comes, but *wisdom* lingers."* Yes; wisdom lingers; "but not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought;" there is abundance of *that*, but that will never bring peace and righteousness to the earth. That will not heal the wounds of man, or dry his tears, or cleanse his heart, or stay his crimes. It is the wisdom that is from above that we want; which is "first pure, then peaceable." Yea; "the wisdom of God in a mystery; even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 6—8.) This in the wisdom that the Gnostics of the age despise, and therefore "they grope as if they had no eyes," and they "stumble at noon-day as in the night." And no marvel; since they pour contempt upon the written word, and blot out the Sun of righteousness from their system. "A scorner seeketh wis-

* Tennyson.

dom and findeth it not, but knowledge is easy to him that understandeth." And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

6. There is *spiritual pride*:—the most subtle and dangerous of all. That pride, for instance, whereby we are puffed up with *self-complacency*, on account of our gifts or privileges; as if we ever should boast of that which is all borrowed—all received as a loan from God, to be accounted for to him, to be used for the glory of the lender, and which could not be had or used at all without his sovereign grace. Or the pride of *self-dependance*, as when a man is puffed up with a vain opinion of his own usefulness, or stability, or holiness, or when he is made an idol of by others. Now God will often permit such an one to fall, for his own sake as well as for the sake of those who have exalted the creature at the expense of the Creator; and there comes in his fall, a message not only to the man's own soul, but to the whole church of God: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" "Ask you the very soul of Peter, and it shall undoubtedly make you itself this answer: My eager protestations made in the glory of my ghostly

strength I am ashamed of; but those crystal tears wherewith my sin and weakness was bewailed have procured my endless joy: my strength hath been my ruin, and my fall my stay."* Or, on the other hand, there is the pride of a *mock humility;* as when a man will plead his own unworthiness and his deep sense of sin as a reason for rejecting the offers of pardon and righteousness in Christ Jesus. This indeed is pride lurking under the specious garb of self-abasement; but it is spiritual pride nevertheless. Dear brethren, cannot we write bitter things against ourselves without writing bitter things against God, and the freeness of his grace? Cannot we humble ourselves to the very dust without at the same time reflecting on the fulness of the Gospel, and undervaluing the merits of Christ, and limiting the Holy One of Israel?

Here then is a great variety in the forms of personal or individual pride. The pride of unbelief —the pride of self-righteousness—the pride of birth—the pride of wealth—the pride of intellect, and spiritual pride.

7. Somewhat allied to this last is a manifestation of pride which we may call *ecclesiastical pride.* This attaches itself to churches, and to persons entrusted with spiritual functions. Spiritual authority and pride are very often united; the one often

* Hooker.

leads to the other, and the *especial snare* of the spiritual ruler is pride: "Not a novice," saith St. Paul, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Tim. iii. 6.) It was this pride which was so remarkably developed, and which our Lord condemned so decidedly, in the Pharisees. They were the ecclesiastics, or, we might rather say, the Papists of our Lord's time, and most soundly did he rebuke and expose them. "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell." They were the most remarkable specimen of spiritual pride that the world had seen. Full of bigotry and intolerance, the very prototype of Popery, they trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. They proclaimed their own infallibility, and excommunicated every one who differed from them. A striking instance we have of their combined arrogance and spirit of persecution in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel, in their treatment of the man that was born blind (24—41.) They reviled him, cast him out, excommunicated him, for exercising a sound judgment and arriving at a logical conclusion respecting Him who had opened his eyes. And

for the manner in which Jesus described and denounced these proud Pharisees you may refer to the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, 5—13, 24—28, 33.

Now it was this ecclesiastical pride which the Apostles of our Lord, after the example of their Master, were most especially careful to disclaim; "Not for that *we have dominion over your faith,*" saith St. Paul, "but are helpers of your joy, for by faith ye stand." (2 Cor. i. 24.) "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves *your servants* for Jesus' sake." (2 Cor. iv. 5.) And what saith St. Peter?—even he from whom the Popes of Rome pretend to be descended according to the genealogy of "apostolical succession," though neither they themselves can prove their pedigree, nor can we trace their resemblance to that Apostle, either in his doctrine or in his humility. What then are Peter's words? "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. *Neither as being lords over God's heritage,* but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Pet. v. 2, 3.)

How contrary is this language to the arrogant claims of the Church of Rome! If we want as complete a personification of ecclesiastical pride as it is possible to conceive, we have it in the Roman

church, which claims to be mistress over all churches of the world, and in the Roman Pontiff, who assumes to be universal bishop, who usurps authority and supremacy over all Christendom, who lords it over kings, and who is blasphemously styled, The Church's "Holy Father," "His Holiness," and "Our Lord God the Pope!" The Scriptures, on the contrary, describe him as "That man of sin, the son of perdition; who opposeth, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

Nearly allied to this pride of Popish usurpation, and leading on to it, is that pride of ecclesiastical domination which unhappily has been allowed to creep into our own communion, and which now lifts up its head amongst us; whereby some of the clergy would restrain "our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:"—whereby they would exalt themselves to a position which Christ has not authorized them to occupy, lording it over the souls, the faith, and the consciences of men; denying them the *right* of private judgment, and debarring them from the plain *duty* of exercising it, as they will have to answer for it before the tribunal of Christ. This pride of priestly assumption is thoroughly odious

in the sight of God, as it is destructive to the souls of men; it is abhorrent from the true spirit of a Christian church and from the meekness of the Gospel of Christ; and most assuredly, in whatever church this pride is found, and wherever it lurks, it will sooner or later be exposed,—it will be brought down and humbled, and it will bring those down along with it who have fostered and encouraged it.

8. The last manifestation of pride which I shall notice is *national pride:* that pride whereby a nation or a kingdom is exalted with the idea of its own greatness, or flatters itself with the imagination of its security, regardless of Him who ruleth on high, and who holds in his hands the destinies of kingdoms as well as of individuals,—regardless of Him of whom it is written, "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation or against a man only." (Job. xxxiv. 29.) Brethren, national pride consists especially in a nation's casting off all regard for the government and the providence of God in their national concerns; in refusing to trace any connection between public piety and public prosperity; in not choosing to acknowledge that a nation's religion is her best protection, and that a nation's sins are her surest and quickest

road to degradation; as it is written, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."*

England has been guilty of this national pride: for we have been proud of our armies, and of our conquests, and of our extended empire. We have boasted of our wealth and of our commerce, of our wooden walls, and of "the flag which for a thousand years has braved the battle and the breeze." We have been proud of our sailors, whilst we have neglected their souls. We have been proud of our great Exhibition. We have boasted of progress and of development, of the march of intellect, of education, and the like. We have dreamed of an approaching period of universal peace,—of peace without truth; of the cessation of war without the cessation of sin; and of the regeneration of the world without a Saviour and without a God. These are some of our national idols; these are some of the theories of the age we live in. And may it not be, my brethren, that God has a controversy with us because of this pride, and that he will break our national idols, and stain our national glory, and bring down our lofty looks, and pour contempt upon all our honourable men, and upon all our boasted theories? For he

* Prov. xiv. 34; comp. Jer. xviii. 7—10; and 2 Chron. xxviii. 19.

is the King of heaven, "all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

III. And this brings us to the last division of our subject:—THE ABASEMENT OF THIS PRIDE IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST. It is to the period of Christ's second coming that our texts refer; to the day when "they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." (Isa. ii. 11—17. And thus also with the passage in Malachi: "For behold the day cometh that shall burn

as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (Mal. iv. 1.)

1. In the first place, all human pride shall be abased in the Kingdom of Christ *by the discovery of man's thorough incapacity, in his present state, to govern or to bless the earth.* All his boasted intellect, all his schemes of improvement, all his theories of progress, shall be proved to be utter failures. The world will have gone on, up to the very moment of Christ's interposition, subject to vanity, groaning under the curse, longing, struggling to be delivered; and yet never delivered by its own efforts and contrivances. The men of might, and of science, and of philosophy, and of a generous beneficence, will have *done their best:* but they will, every one of them, be compelled to confess that they have not wrought any deliverance in the earth. The wounds of suffering humanity will be still unhealed, the bondage of corruption will still remain, and will frustrate their plans and thwart their purposes. Evil men shall still "wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived:" and the whole creation will travail in pain together until the very last. Kings and princes, priests and prelates, all of them together, will have failed

—signally failed. They will have failed to keep the world in order, and to bless its inhabitants with permanent prosperity and peace. "And *then* shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." He will come with *power:* that is, with that which will be most wanted: and because there will be no intercessor, no one to stand in the breach, and to roll back the roaring waves of democratic fury, "therefore his arm shall bring salvation unto him, and his righteousness shall sustain him." He will take the matter into his own hands. He will arise and plead his own cause: and "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him: and the Redeemer shall come to Zion."* He will take up the abused and fallen sceptre, and, as the true Melchizedek, he will sit upon his throne and will rule over a regenerated world. "The government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.)

Then shall all the pride of man be stained and

* Compare Isa. lix. 16—21; Ps. lxxiv. 10—23; Luke xxi. 25—28. These passages clearly set forth sin reaching its culminating point; the helplessness of man to make head against it; and the interference of "the Second Man, the Lord from heaven," to put it down.

humbled, for then shall it be demonstrated that man, left to himself, is incapable of ruling. A mismanaged, a disordered, and a dislocated world, shall bear testimony to the helplessness and incapacity of all human governments; and the handwriting shall be seen upon every throne, and upon every cabinet, and upon every hierarchy, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." The whole world will read the inscription written legibly as with the finger of God. The lesson will be humbling, but it will be necessary. Rulers both civil and ecclesiastical, churches, as well as secular governments of every kind, whether they be monarchical or republican, shall be compelled to learn the lesson. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

2. Observe again, that God will abase the pride of man in the kingdom of his Son, *by selecting such an instrumentality for carrying out his purposes of the world's regeneration, as will be altogether removed from man's present conceptions, and quite contrary to his fondest hopes.* Man's theories of the world shall be thoroughly disappointed; his proud boasting, his proud philosophy, and his proud imaginations shall all be put to confusion by the unexpected methods which God will take to

remodel the world, and to bring in "the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." For what shall they be? Why, that very machinery and those very means shall be chosen, which of all others the world has been most accustomed to deride.

THE SAINTS AND THE JEWS :—these will be God's selected instruments for the accomplishment of his purposes in the Kingdom of Christ. Then, as now and as ever from the beginning, he will shew to all the world that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and that the weakness of God is stronger than men." Then, as now, he will speak to us by his Son, and he will say, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord." At his second coming, as well as at his first, the Lord Jesus Christ shall stain the pride of man by "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and by bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." For when he shall take to himself his great power and shall reign, *how* shall he reign, and *with whom* shall he reign? He will take the despised and persecuted saints, and he will be glorified in them and reign with them. Having made them his from all eternity by his sovereign grace, and having redeemed them from among men, and gath-

ered them out from the beginning from all nations, and kindreds, and people, he will surround himself with their multitude, he will set them forth as the jewels of his crown, and he will make them the assessors of his government and of his throne. Yes, my brethren, these saints who have been treated "as the filth of the world and as the offscouring of all things unto this day;"—these saints who were "stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword," who were "destitute, afflicted, tormented;"—these saints who "wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth;"—these are the men *by whom* and *with whom* he will "judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth." "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2.) Is it not written in the Book of Psalms, "this honour have all his saints?" What honour? Hear and understand: "To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with links of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord." (Psalm cxlix. 7—9.) Is it not written in this 4th chapter of Malachi, "Ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts."

(Mal. iv. 3.) Is it not written in the book of the Redeemer's Advent: "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." (Rev. ii. 26, 27.)

Behold then, my brethren, the abasement of pride in the Kingdom of Christ, by the government of the world being entrusted to those whom, most of all, the world shall have despised. "The kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. vii. 27.) Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

3. And so again with the Jews. The Lord will "stain the pride of all glory, and bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth," *by bringing*

the house of Israel once more upon the scene, and by making them the hinge of the world's blessedness. He will take them into his favour again, he will accomplish all his glorious promises in their behalf, and he will make them as "life from the dead" to a dark and degenerated world. Yes; the Jews, who have been literally "trodden down of the Gentiles" during the whole of the Christian dispensation, who have been thrown on one side, so to speak, as perfectly useless; cast out as contemptible; and made, for the last eighteen centuries, "a proverb and a by-word among the nations;"—God will take *them*, and by *them* he will bless and renovate the earth. "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and shall fill the face of the world with fruit." (Isa. xxvii. 6.) The great ones of the earth, and the high ones, and the so-called wise, might be disposed to say with regard to the Jewish nation, as their enemies said aforetime, "What do these feeble Jews?" How is it possible for the world to be either the better or the worse for their political existence or extinction? What good or harm can it do us or them to admit them to civil rights?* In fact, they look upon the Jews as perfectly contemptible; they deem them unworthy

* The author must not be supposed, from these expressions, to favour the admission of Jews into Parliament.

of any efforts that we make for their conversion; and as to their affecting the future destinies of the world, the idea appears to them preposterous. Nevertheless, whatever the world may think of it, it is God's revealed will, and it will be God's plan to raise up a ruined and degraded world by means of these despised and feeble Jews. "*Salvation is of the Jews:*" these words will be verified once more, and, as it is predicted at the opening of this chapter, "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Not Rome, or London, or Paris, or Vienna, but JERUSALEM, shall be the great metropolis of the earth, the centre of unity, the seat of government, and the dwelling place of God. The Jews shall be the priesthood of the world and the aristocracy of the earth. "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." (Is. lxi. 6.) When the stout-hearted shall have been spoiled and slept their sleep, when none of the men of might shall have found their hands, when all human power shall have become bankrupt, and the world shall lie broken, and helpless, and ruined at the feet of those who have misgoverned and destroyed it; then, man's extremity will be God's opportunity. And "there shall come out of Zion THE

DELIVERER!" "At thy rebuke, O *God of Jacob,* both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep." The tide of war and of the world's misery, shall be stayed on Mount Zion. "There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle." (Psalm lxxvi. 3.) The crisis of the world's history shall be settled at Jerusalem. And when the Son of man shall interpose for the world's deliverance, when he shall come to take off the curse, and to sweep away "the mockeries of man," and to bind the usurper, and to introduce "the promised Sabbath," he shall pour contempt upon the pride of man by appearing in the midst of the most despised of all the people on the earth. The Lord will arise upon Zion, and his glory will be seen upon her. He will bless the Jews, and in blessing them he will bless the world; according as it is written, "God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. God shall bless *us* (Jews), and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." (Psalm lxvii. 1, 2, 7.)

"The beam that shines on Zion's hill
Shall lighten every land;
The King who reigns in Zion's towers
Shall the whole world command."

How contrary will all this be to human expec-

tation, and how humbling to human pride! Kings shall minister to these derided Jews; yea, they shall bow down to them with their face toward the earth. Many people and strong nations shall court their alliance; they will cling to their very skirts, saying, "We will go with you," instead of avoiding and shaking them off as they do now. Yea, they shall be their tributaries, and shall bring their wealth and their honour and their glory to Jerusalem, upon pain of the King's displeasure. For what are the King's words? "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."* And thus "the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

4. But observe further, that all pride shall be abased in the kingdom of Christ by *its entire exclusion from it.* There shall no proud man enter therein. Every one shall occupy his own allotted place, and no one will aim at pre-eminence over his fellow. The sons of Zebedee will not ask that they might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, in their Master's kingdom; but each will fill the post prepared for him of the Father, and will take possession of it with thankful-

* Compare Isa. lx.; Isa. xlix. 18—26; Zec. viii. 18—23; and Zec. xiv.

ness and praise, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." *Individual or personal pride* shall find no place in the kingdom of the Lord. Whether it be the pride of infidelity, or of self-righteousness, or of moral character; or whether it be the pride of human intellect, or of birth and station, or of place and power, or of riches and accomplishments; pride from whatever source it may proceed, shall be stained and humbled then. "For the day of the Lord shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low." "But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." The promises of the kingdom are made to those who have first undergone the humbling discipline of the cross. They only are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light and shall reign with Christ upon the earth, who have first continued with him in his temptations, and with him have borne the yoke of humiliation, and suffering, and self-denial. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." (Luke xxii. 28, 29.) There is a correspondence between the kingdom of grace and the kingdom

of glory, inasmuch as the humbling process that goes on in the one is our preparation for that exaltation which takes place in the other. "Before honour is humility," "and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." What was set forth first, and by way of pattern and pre-eminence, in the *Head,* takes place in every one of his living and faithful *members. He* humbled himself, and therefore he was highly exalted. *He* drank of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head. And so it will be with *them.* The one great and pervading law of the kingdom of Christ is, that a man should become great by self-abasement, and be exalted by humility. The roads to honour in his kingdom are diverse from those which distinguish the kingdoms of the earth. "Ye know," he said, "that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, *but it shall not be so among you;* but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mat. xx. 25—28.).

Faith in the Gospel of Christ humbles the pride of our hearts, and so prepares us for our exaltation in the kingdom of the saints. The scheme of sal-

vation in Christ Jesus involves an absolute humiliation of self, and an utter prostration of our high-mindedness. It represents man as entirely destitute of anything in his natural character or in his efforts that could recommend him to God, or which could be regarded by his Judge as any ground of his acceptance. It is a scheme of pure and unmerited mercy, and every one who is to receive the blessings of it must sue for them in the character of a condemned criminal, and accept them through the righteousness of another. Nothing can be more distasteful to human pride than this method of deliverance, but nothing can be more welcome and more precious to those who have been taught to feel their need of it, and to embrace it by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and who have been made willing in the day of his power. "The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way:" and having so taught and guided and humbled them by his grace, he will afterwards receive them to glory. For when the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he separate between the humble and the proud. "He will shew strength with his arm. He will scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He will put down the mighty from their seat, and will exalt the humble and meek."

5. *Ecclesiastical pride* shall be abased in the

kingdom of Christ. There shall be no place found there for any hierarchy or for any priesthood that sets itself up in mimic representation of the priesthood of Christ, or for the pretended repetition of his sacrifice. Our great High Priest will occupy his rightful throne then; and Antichrist, who has usurped it and caricatured it by his blasphemous pretensions of an universal supremacy, shall be cast into the lake of fire. "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;"—a royal priest—a priest upon his throne. "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries." (Ps. cx. 4—6.) But more especially shall that most egregious example of sacerdotal pride and arrogance which the world ever saw, and which the Church of Rome has exhibited, be humbled, and exposed, and judged by the Lord Jesus Christ "at his appearing, and his kingdom." The downfall of Babylon will be then. The voice of prophecy has pronounced her doom: "A mighty angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Rome may rise previous to her

final fall. Yea, she *has risen*. She is *rising* now. But it is but the culmination of her pride and haughtiness previous to her everlasting downfall. She may put forth, as she is doing now, her most determined efforts, and assert her most insolent pretensions. She may gather heart and arrogance in proportion as she entices around her (strange to say in these latter days, and amid the enlightenment of the nineteenth century!) much of the talent, and of the rank, and of the intellect of England; and stranger and sadder still, a great company of the clergy of our national church. She may put forth her machinery of mystery and miracle, and she may work mightily "after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders." She may swell with pride and self-complacency as she succeeds in her "deceiveableness of unrighteousness;" as she overrides the faith and liberties of Christendom; as she deceives all nations with her sorceries; as she corrupts, infatuates, and enslaves the kings and princes of the earth; as she bewitches governments and statesmen, or (if she does not actually bring them under her bondage), as, at any rate, she enfeebles and paralyzes them, and baffles their measures. She may do all this: she *is* doing it. We expected it, for so it is written; but nevertheless her destiny is fixed, and her downfall is at hand. "And I

heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." (Rev. xviii. 4—8.

6. Lastly, *all national pride shall be abased in the kingdom of Christ.* When Babylon falls, we are assured in Scripture that "*the cities of the nations*" shall fall with her. She will drag down in her overthrow many thrones and principalities and kingdoms:—all that have had part in her abominations, and have been contaminated with her system. So we find it written in the Book: "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto

the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." (Rev. xvii. 12—14.) I fear, brethren, that England may come in amongst these ten kings, unless indeed she repent of the strength and encouragement she has given to the beast by the pay, the patronage, and the power with which she has endowed Popery. But be this as it may, most assuredly every government, every state, every prince, every prelate, and every man that has had a share in the sorceries of Babylon, that has been corrupted by her idolatry, or that has waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies, shall also receive of her plagues; and when *her* pride is stained, they who have waxed proud along with her shall be humbled also.

We have had already in the history of the world many precursive indications of the abasement of national pride. We have seen specimens of the fall of mighty dynasties, and of the casting down of the monarchs and princes of the earth. Remember Nineveh, and Assyria, and Babylon, and Tyre, and imperial Rome. Remember Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar, Antiochus, Alexander and Napoleon. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

The highest and most pre-eminent elevation will not prevent the predestinated doom, and will only add to the depth and degradation of the fall. What was said of Edom will be found to hold good of every other nation that is exalted with pride. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and make thy *nest amongst the stars*, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." (Obadiah 3, 4.) Where pride is, rank and nobility will not protect us: for "the day of the Lord will be upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan." The strength of our political institutions and the most wisely balanced constitution will not protect us: for the day of the Lord "will be upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up." Our fortified bulwarks and our national defences will not protect us: for the day of the Lord will be "upon every high tower and upon every fenced wall." Our national wealth, our commercial greatness, our maritime power, our gorgeous luxury, our Babylonish splendour, and our mediæval revivals, will not protect us: for the day of the Lord will be "upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures."

Numbers will not protect us; for how do we find it written? "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters. The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like the thistledown before the whirlwind." (Isa. xvii. 12, 13.)

What, then, *will* protect us? My brethren, if there be national pride, if there be the exaltation of self, if there be the putting of the creature into the place of the Creator, if there be the worshipping of any of the gods of the world's idolatry, and the looking to them for help instead of to Him who ruleth over all, then nothing will protect us. If, in the pride of our wealth or of our mistaken liberality, we cast off God, He will cast *us* off. For is it not written, and do not the words apply to nations as well as to individuals: "Them that honour me I will honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed?" If we praise the gods of silver and gold, of brass, of iron, of wood, and stone, but do not glorify the God in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways, what can we expect? If we cast away that protest against Rome, which hitherto has proved to be our

shield, if we cast it from us as too antiquated and too illiberal, forsooth, for these enlightened times, if we unravel the thread of Christianity, which, by the wisdom of our forefathers, has been entwined into all the forms of our constitution, then what can we expect but that we shall be shorn of our strength, that the God of England will forsake us and will go out no more with our hosts, that He will write ICHABOD upon our Church and State, and that as a nation we shall have to learn the humbling lesson, that "they that walk in pride he is able to abase."

1. Therefore, my beloved brethren, in conclusion, let us learn humbly and heartily *to pray for our rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical,* for our PROTESTANT Sovereign, and all who are placed in authority under her; that He, in whose hands are the hearts of kings, and who turns them as it seemeth best to his Godly wisdom, would so dispose and govern their hearts (and especially at this momentous crisis of our history); that in all their thoughts, words, and works, they may ever seek HIS honour and glory, and study to preserve the people committed to their charge in wealth, peace, and godliness. Oh, that God would graciously hide all kinds of pride from our rulers and our statesmen, that they may be deeply conscious of their sacred responsibility; that they may seek to

fulfil their high calling and vocation, by holding their sceptres *from* Him and *for* Him, for the punishment of wickedness and vice, and for the maintenance of TRUE religion and virtue—remembering that solemn account which they must one day give before the tribunal of Christ; that so, the tranquillity of these realms may be lengthened by the good hand of our God upon us, and "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

2. And while we thus supplicate mercies from the God of Heaven upon our country and her rulers, let us learn to look well and narrowly at ourselves, and to watch and pray much and earnestly against *our individual pride*. Let us bring that pride continually under the light of God's holy Law and of his blessed Gospel. Yea, let us often behold it in the light which both Sinai and Calvary reflect upon it, until we see it in all its odiousness and deformity; until we hate it as the sin of devils, the sin which cast angels out of heaven, and drove Adam out of Paradise, and ruined the world; until we loathe ourselves and are ashamed of ourselves for having so often indulged it, and having so much of it still clinging to us and infecting all our actions.

3. But especially, *let us bring our pride to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*. It is there that by

faith and prayer, and stedfastly looking unto Jesus, our pride is humbled, and that we are led to abhor ourselves and to repent in dust and ashes. Never are we laid so low as by the discoveries of God's forgiving love in Christ Jesus. The thunders of the law may terrify us, the maledictions of Mount Sinai may crush us, but the accents of love and mercy which come to us from Him who died for us on the cross melt and subdue us. While they announce to us that our sins are forgiven, and assure us that "God is love," and that he has given us a full and all-sufficient Saviour, they fill us with the most self-abasing thoughts, they humble us to the very dust, and bring down our high looks and our high thoughts of pride and self-sufficiency. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins." "Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee."

"Tis then a voice is heard within
That breaks the tyrant yoke of sin;
For He our load of guilt who bore—
He bids us go and sin no more."

4. But lastly, *recollect that pride will cling to us to the end.* Never think you have got rid of it. Until you lay down the burden of the flesh, you will not have done with pride. As Augustine truly says, "That which first overcame man, is the last thing which he overcomes." Therefore fight against it until the end. Look ever and con-

stantly to Jesus as the great pattern of humility and the great Healer of your pride. "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "It was for *us* he humbled himself, to expiate our pride: and therefore it is evidently the more just that we follow a pattern, which is both so great in itself and doth so nearly concern us. O humility—the virtue of Christ, how dost thou confound the vanity of our pride!"* Look, then, stedfastly to Jesus, and behold in his lowliness the condemnation and the cure of pride. Look to him, that his wounds, his crown of thorns, his agony and his bloody sweat, his cross and passion, may shew you the malignity, the shame, the littleness of pride. Look to him, that you may be "changed into the same image from glory to glory —even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Look to him for strength, for his sufficient and almighty Spirit, that by his grace you may be taught to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, that you may be clothed with humility, not as an occasional ornament, but as an every-day dress. Take the yoke of him who is meek and lowly in heart, and you will find that in bearing it there is rest, that in humility there is repose, and that "blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

* Leighton.

LECTURE VI.

THE DELIVERANCE OF THE MEEK IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY THE REV. B. PHILPOT,
RECTOR OF GREAT CRESSINGHAM, LATE ARCHDEACON OF SODOR AND MANN.

PSALM XXXVII. 11.

"*But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*"

MATTHEW V. 5.

"*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*"

WHATEVER this heirship may include, it is evidently an earthly reward; and as such our Lord sets his seal to the prophetic promise. So important did he regard it to the comfort of his Church, that in two at least out of the eight beatitudes, with which he opens his sermon on the mount, he

emphatically repeats the blessing. And again, in that model form of prayer, which he presently teaches his disciples, we find its two leading petitions referring entirely to this future inheritance. Future it must be, for the prayer is left for our use till the Lord return in glory.

This distinctness of testimony to the fact of an earthly inheritance, inspires a confidence not always secured in speaking of what is future. Difficulties there yet will be, as in all unfulfilled prophecies, in connection with its details. But if I am enabled to place fairly before you the witness of Scripture on this point, and the Lord will graciously send the Holy Spirit to give power to the Word, a blessing shall not be wanting to those who "receive it with meekness."

There are no prophetic Scriptures that warm the heart and give a living impulse to the spirit of devotion, like these of David. They are the holy breathings of a soul enjoying a triumphant foretaste of the world to come; and catching, in the spirit, glimpses of the light that shines on heavenly glories yet to be unfolded to the church. The Psalms have well been called the heart of the Bible.

In the Psalm before us we have the final doom of the righteous and the wicked, (verses 3, 9, 11, 22, 29, 34.) The general purport of the psalm is,

that when God shall execute judgment on "the seed of the wicked," his "saints shall not be forsaken" (verse 28). An inheritance shall be provided for them, which is here called "the earth," and "the land;" and it is said, they "shall dwell therein for ever."

A twofold subject of enquiry is here suggested. —I. *Who are the heirs?* II. *What is their promised inheritance?*

I. *Who are the heirs?* They are here generically described by a name denoting that essential characteristic of faith which stamps it with the mark of sincerity, and involves the assured possession of its blessings. The really *meek* man is one who has been taught by the Holy Spirit, of whom meekness is a fruit, to "walk humbly with God," to be thankfully dependent upon him at all times, and to bow unto his will in all things. Whoso is thus minded is perfect in his standing before God. He is "complete in Christ." He has been taught of Christ, and become like-minded with him. He has heard and obeyed that Word which says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Looking to the same source of Christian meekness, David said, "Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation; and thy right hand hath holden me up; and thy gentleness hath made me great," or, as

the margin renders it, "with thy meekness hast thou multiplied me." (Psalm xviii. 35.)

To such meek disciples of Jesus, the "Lord Jehovah hath respect." He "taketh pleasure in them, and will beautify them with salvation." (Psalm cxlix. 4.) For their deliverance He will "arise to judgment and reprove with equity;" and, under doubtful or difficult circumstances, "the meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach his way." (Psalm xxv. 9.)

We have many striking illustrations of this character in the Old Testament. Unto Abram "the Lord appeared and said, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." And because he walked in faith and humble dependence on God, he was promised "the land wherein he was then a stranger, even all the land of Canaan, for an *everlasting* possession." Moses was distinguished by the divine favour more than all the men that were upon the face of the earth. He had the Spirit of Christ, and the comeliness of Christ was put upon him. He was a great prophet and a mighty prince in Israel; nevertheless, "the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."

But there is one example, unclouded by human frailty, which presents us with a glorious embodiment of this comprehensive grace. As the first

Adam brought ruin on the world by proudly questioning the divine principle of obedience; so the second Adam accomplished our restoration to the forfeited inheritance by a meek submission to the whole will of God,—an obedience unto death, "even unto the death of the cross." With lamb-like patience he stood silent before his fierce accusers. Through days of toil and nights of prayer and privation his meat and drink was to do his Father's will. "I delight," (said he, Psalm xl. 8,) "to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart." It was this feature of the Redeemer's manhood which seems above others to have confirmed his claim to the kingdom. "Tell ye the daughters of Zion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass." I will only add that this frame of spirit is described (James i. 21) as preparing the heart to receive and cherish the truths of the Gospel; and to such hearers the Son of God was anointed by the Holy Spirit to proclaim it. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." (Isaiah lxi. 1.)

It thus appears, both from the doctrine and examples of Scripture, that the "meek" are such as have been renewed in the spirit of their mind into the likeness of Christ, who himself is "the express

image of God." The term, therefore, implies the renewal of the fallen creature into the image in which he was created. Thenceforth he is "a new creature," "a living epistle of Jesus," "not easily provoked" by bitterness and misrepresentation; "when reviled, he reviles not again;" when overreached, he "frets not himself because of evildoers," for his treasure is laid up where the fraudulent cannot touch it; if despised or "persecuted for righteousness' sake," he bears it meekly, for Jesus has said, "Great is your reward in heaven." He reckons that not only are "the sufferings," but even the joys and riches of this present time not worthy to be compared with "the glory which shall be revealed;" and this makes him willing to be least of all and last of all, so that in all things his loved Master may be glorified.

It is found, moreover, that this grace is usually combined with a bold resistance of evil and a distinct witness for Christ. Moses was "mighty in deeds" to serve his people, and fearless in reproving Pharaoh, though the meekest man on the earth. Abraham flew to the rescue of his righteous kinsman out of the hand of the four victorious kings, though he walked humbly with God, and lived peaceably with all men. Paul stood before kings, and was not ashamed of the Gospel, while he confessed himself "the chief of sinners," and exhorted

the believers to "walk with all meekness and long-suffering." Thus the lowliest followers of the Lamb in every age, "out of weakness were made strong," "waxed valiant in fight," and, both with spiritual and carnal weapons (when needful), have "put to flight the armies of the aliens."

This, in a few lines, is the scriptural portrait of the "meek" man. It is of such that the Psalmist says, Ps. xxxvii. 11: "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace;" and on such that our Lord pronounces his benediction, Matt. v. 5: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

It may be well, before we speak of the promised inheritance, to say a word on the opposite character, so often denounced in these Scriptures. As "the meek" is a general term used to denote the people of God, so "the proud" is an expression frequently adopted in describing the enemies of Christ. In Ps. cxl. we have instance of this: compare verse 5 with 4.

Pride, whether in man or angel, is that species of rebellion against God which evidences alienation of heart from his government; and in whatever age or country, where God has recorded his name, it has become general, it has been visited by his sore displeasure. Every former dispensation of the world has been broken up by the arrogance of the

human mind, drawing down the judgments of God; and the same spirit of pride and disorder will hasten the close of our own dispensation. It seems already to be doing its work. The Adamic state closed in wrath when man said, "I will be as God." The floods descended and drowned the earth because the Lord found it "filled with violence." The fires of heaven engulphed the guilty cities of the plain at a time when all rule and dominion were despised. "This one fellow came in to sojourn (said they of righteous Lot), and he will needs be a judge." We will be our own judges. And the children of Abraham became outcasts and wanderers, when "they forgat the Lord their God," and "said in their heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." (Deut. viii. 17.) In each case the attempt to be independent of God filled up the measure of iniquity, and caused the heavy wrath of God to fall upon them.

"And as it was in those days, so," said our Lord, "shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed." Most men will then be "minding earthly things" to the exclusion of heavenly things; following their own will and neglecting God's; seeking their own glory and not his; "lifting up their horn on high, and speaking with a stiff neck;" saying, "Who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice?" and of Jesus, "We will

not have this man to reign over us." St. Peter, while comforting the saints with the promise of their deliverance in the day of judgment, describes those on whom the fiery indignation will chiefly fall, as "presumptuous and self-willed, despising government, and not afraid to speak evil of dignities." (2 Pet. ii. 10.) In the description which St. Paul gives of mere nominal Christians in the last perilous days, he has these corresponding marks: "Lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, incontinent, heady, high-minded, having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." In a word, the "evil doers," of whom it is said (Prov. x. 20), "they shall not inhabit the earth," are characterized mainly as the men that are seeking to govern themselves, while they cast off the government of God; while, on the other hand, the "poor in spirit," the "troubled," "they that have not lifted up their soul to vanity," "*the meek* shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

II. *What is their promised inheritance?* Where is it situated? When and how shall the heirs obtain possession of it? These are solemn and momentous questions. They involve the deep things of God. While we search the Scriptures for light may the Holy Spirit reveal them unto us as far as they "belong to us and to our children!"

In dealing with prophetic questions I can never lose sight of the fact, that the Christian church with one consent during the first three centuries, and in every subsequent period of its greatest purity, received in a plain and literal sense those scriptures which relate to the second advent of Christ. The great council which condemned Arianism proclaimed its belief in the literal meaning of our texts, and all such like passages. There are some serious Christians who still think it derogatory to the glorious character of the promised kingdom to connect it with anything of earth. And in order to escape the difficulty which they thus create, they contend that such expressions as we are now considering mean no more than that the meek inherit, by anticipation in the Spirit, all the goodness and happiness and peace of which an earthly condition is capable.

Now I desire to acknowledge, to the praise of God, that "godliness has the promise of the world that now is, as well as of that which is to come." I appeal to the experience of many a Christian before me when I say, that the life of the believer, though one of chastening and trial, is nevertheless one of enjoyment; "sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." The will and the command of God is (Deut. xiv. 26): "Thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household;" and the state of the believer, when in his

right position for eternity, harmonizes with the divine will. Faith enables him to cast his care on God; to be nothing, and let Jesus be everything; to sit contented on the dunghill, or to sing hymns of praise in the inner prison. And in such a frame of mind, God often honours the soul with a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven, and lifts the heart of that weary one up to sit among princes. I thankfully admit that, with such a view of Jesus' boundless love, even this broken world, sinful and sorrowful though it be, becomes as the gate of heaven.

But, after all, what says the Apostle of himself and of all believers in the present state; "we ourselves groan with ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *e. g.*, the redemption of our body." The body is not yet redeemed. The deep-seated corruption in the little world within us, and the jarring interests of the great world without, painfully keep us in remembrance that we belong to a condition of vanity;—that we are a blighted remnant of that fair creation over whose radiant beauty the sons of God once shouted for joy; that natural disorder, moral defilement, and spiritual death and darkness, fill up the sad record of this sin-smitten world. "It is written within and without; and there is written therein lamentations and mourning and woe."

No; there is nothing on this side the coming kingdom which the children of that kingdom ought to regard as their portion and inheritance. They are, indeed, "begotten again to a lively hope;" even to "that blessed hope:" but hope is not fruition; "earnest expectation" is not inheritance. The inheritance promised is that which the saints shall receive as "joint heirs with Christ," who is "heir of all things." "Having suffered with him, they shall also reign with him." The right of redemption is his; for He hath paid the debt, and is ready to take the bride home. The right of inheritance is in the saints, for Jesus said, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;" and "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne." That throne is an earthly one, for it is called "the throne of David;" and in the vision of Daniel (vii. 18, 27,) the extent of this kingdom is declared to be "under the whole heaven," and that the "saints of the Most High shall take it and possess it for ever."

The season when he will leave the Father's throne and take possession of his own is described by St. Peter as "*times of refreshing;*" a glorious rest for the redeemed creature; and also "*times of the restitution of all things:*" when Jesus shall fulfil his promise: "Behold, I make all things new." By our Lord himself it is called "*the regeneration,*"

(Matt. xix. 28,) implying that the same entire change will then take place in the body of every believer, and in "the creature," which, through his fall, became "subject to vanity," as now takes place in the soul when it is converted to God.

But in further proof that this inheritance, or kingdom in which the saints will reign with Jesus, is on this restored earth, I would refer you to the eighth Psalm, and its exposition in the second chapter of Hebrews. We there plainly read (as was shewn in a former series of lectures) that this present earth, with its living creatures, is to be rescued from the dominion of the enemy and avenger, who is now its Prince; and placed in a state of *restitution, refreshment,* and *regeneration,* not under the rule of angels, but in subjection to the second Adam. The earth thus renewed is there called "the world to come," which literally interpreted is, *the habitable earth that is to be.* The Jews understand the word to include the heavens, or atmosphere, as well as the land; for the air, being the especial abode of wicked spirits (Ephes. vi. 12 and ii. 2), must needs be cleansed no less than the earth. And in that purified atmosphere man will breathe more freely and healthily, and "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days." Is. xxx. 26.

That this inheritance promised to the meek is future, not present, may I think also be inferred from our Lord's prayer. The kingdom for which He teaches us to ask must either be the kingdom of Providence, the kingdom of grace, or the kingdom of glory. It cannot mean either of the two former, for one is already come to all, and the other begins in the heart of the elect immediately on conversion. It can only refer to the kingdom of glory,—a kingdom yet to come, wherein the will of God will be done by the meek who are its heirs, in as large a spirit of love and loyalty and devotion as the angels exercise in the presence of God. Then shall the saying come to pass, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

In regard to the time when the inheritance shall be entered on, it seems to be the *coming* of our Lord, not his *appearing*. His appearance in the air on the glory cloud (which will be "the sign of the Son of man,") will be to gather up to himself all his saints, both quick and dead; and having "changed their vile bodies, and fashioned them like unto his own glorious body," the whole will probably remove higher in the air; and then, as the first act of judgment, the principalities of the kingdom will be apportioned to the co-heirs, according to the diligence with which they have employed the talents entrusted to them: some

being made rulers over ten, others over five, or two, or one city. His *coming to* the earth is an event subsequent to his *appearing above* the earth. His feet shall then stand again on the mount from which he ascended (Acts i.); and it is said (Zech. xiv. 5), "All the saints shall come with him." They must, therefore, have risen and left the earth before that time, or they could not come back with him.

During this judgment of the saints, the earth will be left in an awful state of anarchy; which will increase in violence till the apostate nations of the Roman earth, mustered under their papal and infidel heads, and led on by the Man of Sin, will be gathered together against Jerusalem. Then will the cry of the distressed children of Abraham reach the ear of their Deliverer, and he will reveal himself in flaming fire to the utter destruction of their enemies and his. This is called in Joel and Malachi, "the great and terrible day of the Lord." The wicked shall burn and melt away in the presence of the Lord "like the fat of lambs," and "the transgressors shall be rooted out."

On the Jews thus delivered, "the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out, and they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son." Zech. xii. 10. They will then be nationally converted;

rebuild their city on the plain caused by the earthquake at Jesus' descent (after the pattern given in Ezekiel), and become missionaries to those nations who had not shared the apostasy, and had therefore escaped the first act of vengeance; that act being expressly the punishment of unfaithfulness. The judgment begins at the house of God. "Then shall the Lord be King over all the earth." Zech. xiv. 9.

By the process of fire the heavens and the earth will undergo that great renewal of which we have spoken, and to which "all the prophets have testified since the world began." Not that the earth will be utterly destroyed by fire any more than it utterly perished by water. Probably it emerged from the flood improved in fertility, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air came out of the ark—some more docile and others less formidable to man than before, (Gen. v. 29; viii. 21; ix. 23), still all painfully under the original curse, all subject to vanity (gone astray). Be that as it may, St. Peter makes the two cases analogous. After vengeance has been executed on the despisers of the gospel, the earth itself will be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The removal of the curse will probably not be completed till the close of the millennium; when, after one more

awful development of the odiousness of sin and rebellion, all the enemies of God shall be cast into the lake of fire. "There shall be nothing more to hurt or destroy in all this holy mountain of the Lord" for ever. Perfect "righteousness shall dwell therein." This blighted planet shall again shine forth resplendent in beauty, as a trophy of the Redeemer's love; and throughout the universe but one note of praise be heard, saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

If any here are still disposed to call this a carnal doctrine, let them picture to themselves, if they can, a brighter joy—a more intense delight, than where Jesus reigns the King of Glory, there to reign with Him, ever employed in his holy, happy service, "contrasting the wilderness where we toiled with the kingdom where we reign." It is indeed difficult to realize this glory now, where all betokens ruin, and defilement, and weariness; but let us remember that there is no natural connexion between the earth and sin. The present affinity between materialism and corruption is an accident not a necessity: it is the execution of a sentence, on what every one of the prophets declares to be a remedial disaster. God hath "given the earth to the sons of men;" and there can be no thwarting of his purpose. The supremacy of the Most High may at present appear to the infidel to be success-

fully disputed; but Satan shall at length be seen to be righteously deprived of his headship over the earth, and the original heir shall be re-instated in his restored inheritance. "The meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

I purposed to have put before you those scriptures which declare to us the joys of the meek in that "land of the living" of which they are heirs, but I find some difficulty in distinguishing between details of the millennial kingdom and those of the everlasting Kingdom of Glory which will succeed to it. I think, however, that we may safely draw the following conclusions respecting the millennial earth which the meek shall inherit. To regard it,

1. *Physically.* It will be purified by fire, so as to become a spiritualized though material and visible kingdom,—"not of this world," though on this earth, "for the fashion of this world passeth away." (John xviii. 36.) It is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away." It will become inconceivably brighter and purer at the close of the millennium, when the New Jerusalem will descend to the earth, and all evil be rooted out; but it will never cease to be. St. Paul speaks of it, in one sense, as glory "revealed *in* us;" meaning that the glorified body and soul will be gifted with immensely increased powers, so as to

qualify the redeemed man for reigning with Christ. These are called "the powers of the world to come;" and their range, perhaps, will be the universe. There will be no more oppressive labour. Thorns, and thistles, and weeds, and other marks of the curse being removed by the fire, cultivation will be toilless. (Amos ix. 13.) The once barren mountain shall "drop down with new wine,"—wine of an incorrupt kind, which our Lord said he should drink with his disciples in that kingdom.

2. *Politically.* The inheritance will be the fifth monarchy, typified in the vision of Daniel by "the stone cut out of the mountain;" a dominion erected on the ruins of the fourth monarchy, or ten kingdoms of the Roman earth, consumed by fire. The inhabitants will consist of three classes. 1. The converted Jews: 2. Those in the risen body, and 3. Those still in the flesh. 1. Of the Jews, the time will not permit me to speak. Much light has, indeed, been thrown on this subject in former lectures. They will dwell in their own land in abundance of peace, as the "shields of the earth," (verse 9,) and "living waters shall go out from Jerusalem for the healing and gathering of the nations." 2. The saints; consisting of all who have been converted, of whatever nation, and were found dead or alive at the appearing of the Son of man. They are "accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resur-

rection from the dead." These constitute the bride, the Lamb's wife, whose home will be with Jesus in the New Jerusalem, not yet descended near to the earth, but from which both Jesus and they will make continual visits to the beloved city, the Jerusalem below, the metropolis of the renewed earth. These visits will be in visible bodies, as the ministering spirits of God now make visits in invisible bodies to them that shall be heirs of the kingdom. 3. Those in the flesh will be the nations of the earth not destroyed with apostate Christendom. They shall "come to Judah's light," having heard that the Lord the King is with them; and "whosoever among them shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." All will speak the same language. Life will be greatly extended, but deaths and marriages will still take place among men. These are the three classes which appear to include the inhabitants of the millennial earth. It may be that some even in the apostate nations will repent, and turn to the Lord, and learn righteousness, while his judgments are abroad on the earth, and so be spared for a further trial during the kingdom. Also that some Christians, who have "built hay, and wood, and stubble," on the right foundation, may be left for the sifting fires of that awful time when "the nations shall be shaken," and "the Lord shall plead with

them by fire and sword." But these are speculations, and I dwell not upon them.

3. *Spiritually*, the inheritance will be a visible manifestation of the principles of God's redeeming grace. The children of God will enjoy "glorious liberty" and "abundance of peace." The saints who are with Jesus will have his perfect likeness, and see him as he is, and be satisfied. (1 Jno. iii. 2). "The veil shall be taken off the face of all nations," and "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. ii. 14, margin.)

This is indeed but a faint and feeble allusion to times and scenes of such surpassing glory. To us whose lot is cast in a season of great prophetic light, and amid signs of unmistakeable indication of the second advent, the promise of the coming kingdom is fraught with especial interest, and, I trust, to many here, with a peculiar joy. The King of glory is at hand; he comes to take and to give the heritage to his saints. He obtained it at his ascension; he is about to enter upon it in person. The meek, the upright, the poor in spirit, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, the men of clean hands and pure heart,—all may now "lift up their heads, for surely their redemption draweth nigh."

Dear brethren, do we bear about us these marks

of ownership in Christ? Let us settle the question now. Oh! "let us not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober, and so much the more as we see the day approaching." Satan is yet "the Prince of this world," and disobedient hearts yet furnish him with many a stronghold. The fleshly palaces from which "the stronger man" has driven him form but "a little flock;" and to recover his lost hold on them he is putting forth all his most subtle devices. He knows too well that the natural tendency of every man is "to think more highly of himself than he ought to think." The believer himself is still within the reach of this bewitching snare; for "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." Jehovah hath said, "I am the Lord, and there is none else." But to this all save the meek in heart and poor in spirit are answering, 'No; we will govern ourselves;' "our eyes are opened; and we will be as Gods." In every department of society the spirit of disorder is arising; and it is the humbling confession of many of God's children, that the tempter is at this time powerful in their hearts; leading them to rest on something in themselves, even the graces which Jesus hath imparted to them.

I speak not now of that open defiance of God which is rapidly extending,—especially in France,—from whose most popular publications I could

read you blasphemies that would send you from this church filled with horror and holy indignation. I do not underrate this evil; but the Adversary has a deeper device than this. The poison of his rebellion is mingled with the hallowed waters of the sanctuary. The deepest insults to the Saviour are now concealed beneath the garb of godliness. The most dangerous and profane book which has been circulated in our day is couched in the sublime phraseology of the prophetic Scriptures, and opens, "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

These are warnings, dear brethren, for us to watch more narrowly, and pray more fervently, lest we enter into temptation. Let us beware especially of that pride of intellect which would arraign the Word of God at the bar of human reason, and impiously subject the plain declarations of the Bible to the puny judgment of man's narrow mind. Is it to such an one that God looks in tenderness and compassion? No; "To this man will I look (saith the Lord), even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Is. lxvi. 2.) "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.) That is the text for our day: may the Lord write it on all our hearts! Each year that we lift our warning voice

the signs grow stronger. On every hand the meek are thrust aside from the councils of men, and the bearers of God's message to a lost world are hindered and persecuted. The kings of the earth are committing fornication with the harlot of Babylon, and giving their power and strength into her hand. The self-elected masters of the human mind are looking with impatience for "the coming man," whose surpassing intellect is to rid the world of its old prejudices, and remodel it on a more enlightened basis of thought. Let us too, brethren, be looking out for "the coming man." His philosophy may not meet the proud expectations of the rationalist and the infidel, but in the eyes of his meek and lowly followers He will be "altogether lovely and precious above ten thousand."

Brethren, the times are rapid. The Lord is in haste, for "He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Whatever we have in hand or in purpose which is not according to godliness, let us make haste to lay it aside: whatever associations we may have entered into upon which we hesitate to ask a blessing, let us make haste to come out from them: whatever works and labours of love we are employed in, let us make haste to push them on with twofold vigour of effort, and more self-denying zeal. The heir

should get more meet for his inheritance, and more joyous in spirit, as the time of his minority grows short. So, dear brethren, may it comfort you, and all the despised of this world, to hear the watchman say, "The morning breaketh!" "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 13.)

LECTURE VII.

THE REMOVAL OF THE CURSE.

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REVELATION xxii. 3.

"*And there shall be no more curse.*" *

THE subject before us to-night is "The removal of the curse," which a few words serve to enunciate, but which has required for its accomplishment

* Considerable difficulties are felt on this subject by many as to its connection with *the Millennium*. The following brief remarks may help in some measure to elucidate the *truth*, and careful attention is requested for them previous to a perusal of the sermon.

1. This lecture might easily have been made to assume the form of a more distinct and direct reply to objections, but its object is rather to bring out Scriptural statements than to defend them.

2. The author cannot feel that he has described a single feature of Millennial blessedness which is not *more than* borne out by the Word of God.

all the mighty chain of work and circumstance comprised in the wonderful Book of God, from Genesis to Revelation.

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake," is the righteous sentence pronounced upon sinning man at the very beginning of his history, by Him who had just given forth from the treasure-house of His unsearchable wisdom creation in its freshness and beauty, declaring all that He had made to be very good. Who can tell all the wonders of manifestation and effort, of suffering and of strife, which had passed, when the inspired Seer heard the utter-

3. The application therefore of the text to the Millennium is virtually a mere question of words, and does not touch the facts of the case. That period will be even more happy than he has described it, whether the text be perfectly fulfilled in it or not.

4. And surely when we distinctly remember what the curse in Gen. iii. was, and what the Millennium is predicted to be in the passages we have quoted, in Rom. viii. 19—23 and others, (and the writer has purposely omitted to adduce Rev. xxi., xxii., as a disputed passage), it can scarcely be too much to call the Millennium the "removal of the curse;" nay, he believes it is quite Scriptural to do so, even though a still more perfect condition is to succeed.

There is probably no *real* disagreement after all on the question, when it comes to be sifted, between those who *seem* to differ: and the only alteration the author might feel disposed to wish had been made as to this Lecture is, that it had had for its *text* a passage *less disputed* in its application. Beyond this he is not aware that he would be willing to withdraw anything, believing that his description of the Millennial glory is not in the least *overcharged*.

ance of the same God-man on His throne of glory, saying, "Behold, I make all things new;" and, as the result of all, the wondrous announcement of our text, that there should be no more curse? Wonderful way of doing wondrous things! Had it been proposed to us to conjecture how the infinite Jehovah could best display His glory, we should doubtless have anticipated the onward march of majesty and power, growing in an unchecked intensity of light, and developing unceasingly only fresh features of beauty. It is evident, from the difficulty men find in receiving those predictions which declare the existence of contrast between evil and good in the future glory, that anything of darkness and of sin appears to us too unmanageable to have allowed of our anticipating its introduction, and that we should have concluded that the entrance of *failure*, however slight, would have rendered the *perfection* of glory subsequently hopeless. But with the infinite Jehovah the fact is quite the reverse. It is His prerogative to allow evil to exist, because He can secure His own eternal praise, either by its subjection to His purposes on the one hand, or by more than its retrieval or remedy on the other. Nay, it has pleased Him in His inscrutable wisdom, to identify His greatest glory with the recovery of ruin and the cure of disaster. Sin, which seemed the hopeless leprosy

of our world, and the curse, which appeared to be the bitter and incurable reversal of all creature happiness, have proved the occasion of work so mighty and revelations so boundless, of promise so large and pledges so pregnant for the coming eternity, that we stand amazed at what it would seem must have been locked up for ever, but for this unfathomable arrangement in the everlasting counsels. But while reason speculates, and recoils under a sense of uneasiness from such intricacy and mysteriousness, and a vain philosophy solves every difficulty by substituting its own silly inventions for the great facts of revelation, faith sees only consistency in it all with Him whose ways are unsearchable and judgments past finding out; and instead of being worried with doubts and tormented with difficulties, delights herself in watching the sure development of all the *real* mysteries and *apparent* contradictions into light without any darkness, and glory without a stain.

I. The unalterable and inevitable alliance of corruption with sin, and of misery with transgression, in *rational* and *responsible* creatures, must be clear to all; and with the reason which God has bestowed upon us it is perfectly consistent. The declaration He has made, that "there is no peace to the wicked," has compelled the reluctant confession of its truth from thousands; and it is con-

tinually verified to the eyes of others in those who will not confess it.

But the extension of this principle to the *irrational* and *inanimate* creation is not so easily understood or accounted for, and deserves a few remarks.

1. It stands in connection with *God's sovereign right to do as it pleaseth Him with His own;* a right however always exercised in accordance with the most perfect righteousness; the combination of absolute will with undeviating holiness. And the *irrational* and *irresponsible* creation being so dealt with, establishes all the more distinctly this absolute authority, owing to the necessary absence in their case either of merit or demerit.

2. It is connected with what may be called an almost universal *law* of God's operations, namely, *the giving an outward and visible expression of that which cannot be seen.* As "the invisible things," therefore, "of Him are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made," so it has pleased Him not only that the sin and evil of man's heart should manifest itself in the outward aberrations of his conduct from God's truth, but that the very creation should reflect the vanity and corruption to which he had yielded himself a prey, and remind him continually by the *visibility* of its physical and moral anomalies of his deeper disorder and degradation.

3. *The leprous character of sin* seems most clearly signified by the curse thus passing on the rest of creation. We should have supposed that the necessary impossibility of any responsible participation in the sin by the surrounding world, would have relieved it beyond a doubt from participation in the punishment, and that the habitation would have presented, in its abiding features of happiness, a marked and perpetual contrast to the condition of its inhabitant. But, in the righteous sovereignty of the great Creator, the leprosy spread and the iniquity overflowed; and the groaning and painful travail of that which could not sin, was made to pour the rebuke of its continual complaint into the ears of him who had wrought its destruction with his own. Man had not lighted upon this world, a stranger and a visitor, to look, and wonder, and depart; it had received him as its *head;* and it soon felt too surely, that mutual influence and identity of condition were inevitable, by receiving from that depraved centre defilement and decay to its utmost extremities.

4. Nor is there wanting in this remarkable arrangement, as I conceive, *a feature of singular mercy*. For while this subjection of the creature to vanity for man's sake manifests so distinctly and unmistakeably God's view of sin and His righteous displeasure towards it, it has allowed of His sparing

all the more the sinner himself, thus giving room for the display towards the offender of compassion and forbearance. Not, however, that we are to suppose for one moment that the visible creation could ever become the *substitute* for man, to whom the curse belonged. Such an arrangement could not be endured for an instant. Evidence of sin and illustration of righteousness might be afforded through a material world, and irresponsible, because irrational, creatures; but vindication and propitiation, and therefore *actual substitution*, could only be effected by the wondrous arrangement of ONE THAT WAS WORTHY becoming a *curse* FOR US.

II. The first intimation of the curse is given us, as you will remember, in the passage Gen. iii. 14—19. It was first pronounced on the *serpent*, and secondly on the *ground;* in both cases on the principle we have already noticed, of constituting some visible token or outward sign of what was otherwise unseen; indicating in the former instance the fearful curse falling irretrievably on the devil for ever; and in the latter instance the evil which man's transgression had brought upon him throughout his whole being; not, however, without remedy as in the other case, for God's statement to the serpent (to the eternal praise of His grace be it spoken) had already thrown upon man's ruin and degradation the rays of mercy and of hope.

1. *The exhibition of its effects upon the wicked one* has been very distinct from that time to this, whenever we have been enabled to get a glimpse of his real feelings, as well as in all his ceaseless workings which our history enables us to trace. His unwearied efforts in cruelty, and mischief, and sin, in the old world, to make others what he was himself, miserable and cursed; the admission of his own fearful sufferings when compelled openly to acknowledge his subjection to the Lord of angels, even at a time when that Lord was found in fashion as a man; and the fierce and bitter malignity betrayed from that day forward in the invention of self-tormenting idolatries on the one hand, and the infliction of crushing persecution and extermination on Christ's saints on the other; —all these indicate thus far the righteously fulfilled sentence of which the serpent on his belly and in the dust is creation's abiding index. And of this there is no removal; the lake of fire which is the second death, is its eternal consummation.

2. Of the curse upon *the ground*, the results have been precisely what the Lord stated they would be. "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Even where plenteousness is strewed and abundance reigns, how many eat that bread in sorrow, and amidst their far-sought delicacies are tormented by a discontented spirit, or crushed

through a broken heart. And while the earth has not refused altogether her golden fruits, and her trees still stretch forth their laden branches, yet man eats the herb of the field, and his food is for the most part from the toil of his hands, and with the sweat of his brow. Nor even thus do his fields, without severe effort, open their treasures to his necessities, or yield their harvests to his sowing. Thorns and thistles must be cleared away, and the choking weeds laboriously rooted up, and that not once or twice, but by obstinate untiring husbandry. Indeed the tendency of all that is fertile and fruitful to relapse into its first barrenness, is one of the most humiliating evidences of the inflicted curse. It is God's invincible truth, setting at nought all man's effort to defeat its accomplishment. Witness those lands and cities once not merely enshrined in fruitfulness, but dazzling in glory: and yet thorns are come up in those palaces, nettles and brambles in those fortresses; the cormorant and the bittern possess them, and the owl and the raven dwell there. Even the land that flowed with milk and honey, her terraces are broken down, and her fields are barrenness; her fruitfulness is departed for the sin of them that dwelt therein.

But we are too familiar with all these things to need their lengthened description. The pestilence and the famine, the wild beast and the sword, all

these are the children of the curse; and the completion of our humiliation and the earth's defilement is only reached by the dust receiving back again its beauteous product, man, to putrefaction and corruption within its own bosom.

3. But all this is only *the sign and seal of the deeper evil* wrought in man's moral and spiritual condition. Cursed are they that do err from God's commandments. Alienated from Him by wicked works, they are by nature children of wrath; their mind is carnal, and enmity against God; there is no love of God in their hearts, and no fear of God before their eyes. And be it remembered that the description drawn by an inspired apostle from the Old Testament, of which I have quoted the conclusion is not that of a *few*, more lost and degraded than the rest; but a description of all mankind without exception in their natural and unrenewed condition. Nor is the evil confined to man himself; for *directly*, by his own influence, and not merely by the righteous arrangement of God, does creation feel the moral depravity of her once holy and upright lord. In numberless ways he draws forth, by his selfishness and cruelty, her groaning and sorrow; and he who was first the means of awakening the anguish, has only aggravated, instead of mitigating, the wrong he inflicted.

III. Now, in dealing with all this, God has

wrought in a way which *He Himself* only could have devised. We might have suggested passing the circumstance by as a trifle, and leaving the struggle unheeded to its own issue; or if it appeared that interference on the part of God was necessary, we might naturally have supposed that the only alternative would be to throw up the defiled material, and to dismiss recovery as impracticable. But with Him *failure* is unknown, and *abandonment* impossible. Hindrances in the way of His counsel can only in the end promote His purposes; and interruption by a curse must finally further and enhance the blessing. No creature can *restore* either itself or another. But it is His prerogative to redeem and to retrieve, and to make creature insufficiency the occasion of developing His own inexhaustible resources in their infinite adequacy, to the enhancement of His glory. Hence His method in handling all these intricate and difficult circumstances was the *removal* of the curse, and the consequent inundation of blessing.

And here several points required to be secured.

1. *The vindication and harmonizing of God's character*, so that the curse should not in any way detract from His glory. But the glory must have been less, if the creature had been left hopelessly under the curse, even in a condition of punishment. For although such righteous retribution would have

upheld God's majesty, proving that it could not be invaded with impunity, still His work would have been marred and His purpose apparently frustrated, leaving an imputation upon His sufficiency before the universe at large, as well as room for boasting of partial success to His defeated foes.

Nor is it to be overlooked that the majesty of His *law* could not have gained the same glory, if manifested only in its curse upon the offender, and not also in its blessing on the obedient observer. He gave not forth that law for the sake only of shewing his power over Him that should transgress it, but that He might glorify its righteousness by the exhibition of its beauty in those who should fulfil it. His infinite wisdom will only allow the choice of that path by which the glory to be attained is the highest.

2. *The rendering possible and practicable the reversal of the whole curse,* so that not even a *compromise* would be needed, was another point to be secured. It may be replied that this has not been done, inasmuch as many perish. I admit this last stated fact; but it is nevertheless no proof of failure. All indeed are not saved; but this hangs upon no inability in the great Jehovah to provide a sufficient remedy or an adequate salvation. God has left none without witness of His willingness to save. "This is the condemnation

that men love darkness rather than light;" and no inadequacy in the divine provision, but inexcusable sin in the sinner, is that alone which leaves the curse without its remedy and the transgressor's deliverance hopeless.

3. In connection with this, another necessary condition in the removal of the curse is, *the actual withdrawal of it from man's spiritual being*, so that he may *know* himself to be blessed. Whatever provision be made, it is the recovery of the sinner's soul which must be effected, and the application of the remedy to his conscience that must be fulfilled. He must possess the true deep consciousness of personal blessing. And hence the removal of inward "fear, which hath torment," is essential to the completeness and success of the operation. The *sense* of guilt and of corruption must be met, as discovered by the ever restless anxieties of an awakened soul, whose hurt refuses to be healed slightly, and which denies its confidence to any but a tried foundation. In short, some influence must be found to reach the deep springs of being, and there to supplant all doubt and fear with quiet assurance and confiding love; some power, which, while the still small voice proclaims liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, enables the bondaged soul to spring

upon its feet, and to embrace its deliverer, in the conscious joy of its happy emancipation.

4. And it then becomes a fit sequence of all this, and its necessary completion, that *creation should cease her sighs and put off the garments of her heaviness.* Well may *she* partake the joy of her head, who has so long and so closely been the partner of his sorrows and his sin. As *his* heart warms with holiness and love, so must *her* face brighten with joy and beauty, and every pulse throb with liberty and life. Though no part of her possess his reason or his soul, yet has she waited for the manifestation of the sons of God, and must yet be delivered from the bondage of her corruption into the glorious liberty of His ransomed children.

And *all this* involves what the apostle designates "the reconciling all things unto Himself by Jesus Christ." Even the bringing back *creation* from its curse involves and demands consideration for the highest perfections of God, and regard to the eternal elements of His character. Minute things here become infinite, and apparent trifles enlarge their dimensions to a boundless magnitude. Sin, viewed in its isolation, may appear little to an eye that only ranges within the limits of its own dark and debased atmosphere; but sin can never be isolated, and therefore never little. It stands es-

sentially in relation, be it ever so small apparently, to the immaculate character of our God, and the perfect holiness of His unclouded glory; and so far from being lost and eclipsed by that blaze of light, as man for the quieting of his uneasy conscience would vainly persuade himself, no power that has yet been devised has ever made the minutest atom stand out in its individuality, as that light detects and reveals and realizes the minutest transgression, the "*one* point" of sin. And sin thus recognized must be dealt with, and that consistently; whether it be found defiling the soul of man, or defacing the beauty of a world. And this, one, and one only, could undertake,—Christ, the Word; He that was with God, and was God; the Creator, for "by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made;" but the Redeemer also, by substitution and atonement; and the Restorer, by providence and power; securing the redemption at His *first* coming, and fulfilling the restitution at His *second*.

IV. But we proceed to consider in what results the removal of the curse will manifest itself.

These may be seen to some extent in our *present* condition. As far as the world is blessed now, it is blessed through those very principles and by the very means which will ultimately prevail to make its blessedness universal. In the sphere of indivi-

dual existence, in the family and social circle, in the wider sphere of national association, and even in the relations of the world, any real blessing may be infallibly traced to the influence, by some means, of that truth which has alone prevailed to curb effectually the fierce passions of man, or to give play to the more amiable qualities which wither or are crushed without its sustenance. A just estimate of man's condition apart from this regenerating element, in relation both to his happiness and his usefulness, would surprize thousands. We live far too much on the surface of our own being, and we look too much on the surface of the being of others; and the sparkling of the foam is enough to make us think that we and they are happy. But the deep-flowing stream is turbid and dark and restless; and the more closely we analyze it, the more it proves to be charged with the elements of trouble and sorrow, mischief and death. Take to pieces the fairest life of which truth is not the substance, and with all its amiabilities, its efforts of kindness and its self-devotion, its disinterestedness and its laboriousness, still it betrays the curse, and lacks the blessing. All these are at best but as the withering and shrivelled fruits of the ground that has been cursed, while *that love* is wanting which alone can make the highest apparent moral excellencies the fruitfulness of a Paradise regained.

But where this blessing has even now been shed upon the soul, outward circumstances may be adverse; disadvantages may be great personally and circumstantially; poverty, sickness, suffering, death, may be the condition, but yet the curse is gone; the peace that has entered there must prevail: God is Himself concerned in all the life of that soul, for it is true and real and indestructible; and its conflicts and anxieties and cares are not the transient phases of a giddy and trifling spirit, but the strugglings of an earnest creature towards that hope, which has become its sure portion. And now, personally and relatively, with it may be many drawbacks and more than there ought to be, that soul is blest and a blessing. Ordinary mercies take the peculiar form of a Father's mindful goodness, while a sense of heavenly relation consecrates with its peace the inward consciousness; and hence, in the diffused fragrance of the resulting conversation, the world itself begins to detect an influence and a fascination of which at least it has *one* impression, that itself has never been able to yield the like.

But the removal of the curse, in the full and proper sense of the words, belongs to the millennial glory and to the life which will succeed; and it is time that we attempt to trace it in a few of its leading particulars.

1. As Satan was the means of first introducing the curse, and has ever since been unwearied in seeking to aggravate its consequences to the earth and its inhabitants, so we are not surprized to find that its removal is connected *with the prevention of his assaults upon the mind and heart of man.* It is to be feared we are little aware of the extent to which he prevails with us at present. We speak of his temptations, and sometimes perhaps excuse ourselves very unreasonably by assigning the blame too exclusively to him; but it does not follow from this that we have any adequate idea of his working, or that he is not infinitely more successful with us where we least of all suspect him. How much must he be able continually to accomplish in fanning the flame of evil and in checking the aspiration after good, in turning the most ordinary circumstances into occasions of sin, and in diverting attention and interest from all that is wholesome and saving. But all this will then be impossible. He will not be there to suggest the abuse of all that is good, or to encourage the preference and substitution of that which is evil. I scarcely think it possible fully to conceive what the exclusion of such a tempter will amount to. And hence may arise the extremely inadequate conception which I believe prevails of what the millennium will be. His special effort too seems to be, not

merely to entice the individual to sin, but to make each one, like himself, the tempter of others. The agency, therefore, of himself and of his numberless hosts is one organized system of acting upon individuals that they may act upon others. *Combining* men in evil is the great secret of his success; and thus he has driven them like sheep before him to their destruction, or made them the ready destroyers and murderers of others. But all this will cease; and if there be anywhere any tendency to sin, as may be partially the case, there will be no watchful spirit in the keenness of his malignity turning every spot to leprosy, and rendering all evil infectious and pestilential.

2. *The liberation of the saints from death at the first resurrection, and their blessedness in the light and glory of the new Jerusalem,* will be another feature of special prominence in the removal of the curse. Indeed we have no description in the Word of God of a more perfect condition than this. Saved from everything which can impair, and endued with everything which can advance the eternal happiness of body and soul, beyond the reach of all corruption, and within the verge of all glory, theirs in the highest sense of the word is a condition without a curse. Gathered now into the arms of everlasting unchangeableness, the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne leading

and feeding them, they hunger no more, neither thirst any more; for He dwelleth among them, and the old things are passed away. To them there is neither sorrow nor crying, neither sin nor death. They have washed their robes, and shall no more be defiled; they have put on their garments of life, and shall no more put them off. Blessed are they; for they are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and from their Father's house shall they go no more out.

3. *The presence and manifestation of our Lord* is the next point we would notice. I presume not to define exactly the degree or frequency of our Lord's visible appearances, though much may be gathered from Scripture concerning them. But beyond the faith which will still believe in Him for salvation, I doubt not that there will be vouchsafed to the blest inhabitants of our earth in due measure the vision of Himself in His glory, and that they will possess, wherever they may dwell, the consciousness of His being present on the earth. His absence we know to be needful now, and that it is answering the most important ends; but in itself it is the feature of an imperfect condition. We love one whom we have not seen. "We walk by faith," which is imperfect; "and not by sight," as we shall do when we are perfected: (for such is the force of that passage.) "I will not," said

John, "with ink and pen write unto thee; but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak *face to face.*" The Lord walked with man in his first Paradise; and His presence was doubtless the surpassing charm of all its beauty and blessing. Only when the curse had entered did that presence become intolerable; and the trees of the garden were sought as a shelter from a countenance before so loved and delighted in.

Others have seen that face since, when it was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; and many then despised Him; and those who loved Him scarcely understood His worth or His glory. But when He returns again to be the uninterrupted gaze of His risen saints, who, on whatever errand they might speed their way, would still be able methinks to turn their eye upon that countenance, He will also manifest Himself to the eyes of this world's inhabitants, who, in the intervals of that blessed vision and of their visits to the temple and the mountain, must often be refreshed and rejoiced by the remembrance of a manifested Lord. We cannot forget that many acts of blessing were associated with His personal ministry on earth; and if a mother's heart then throbbed with delight to see her little one in His arms, and if his gesture and deed only enhanced that delight by its indescribable tender-

ness, surely the like benediction and much more will not be wanting in that day, when on this earth, hitherto the scene of the curse, He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. And as those who come up from time to time to worship the Lord at Jerusalem refresh themselves with holy intercourse in the interval, in their, it may be, distant dwellings, will not the recollections of their King many a time form the topic of their converse, as their hearts overflow with His love, and their tongues sing of His kindness?

4. In connection with the point last named, may be mentioned *the administration of the earth by the risen saints, and the consequent blessing of such intercourse to its inhabitants.* At present the family is divided, a large portion being the other side the veil; and those in the world precluded from any interchange of thought and affection, except in comparatively few instances. Such limitation, however, will no longer exist. All the departed worthies, whose inspired histories have been the common and precious inheritance of the Church of God will be within reach and knowledge: and those too who by the same grace in later generations, have encouraged their brethren in their various spheres by their faith and love shall be recognized in their perfected condition; and all shall gladden and refresh by their heavenly com-

munications, hearts and ears that can appreciate their message. Separation will not be needful between those in the resurrection glory and such as still wear the body of the flesh; and visitations from a higher world, of which the very thought in our present condition creates dismay or terror, will become the habitual experience of those in whom holiness abides, though still in an earthly tabernacle. Nor let it be forgotten that the administration of the earth by the saints will preserve it free from all oppression, and secure throughout the perfect rule of righteousness and peace. These blessings will not be attained by a necessity which annihilates all will, and makes man but as it were another planet of his own system; but they will be the result of intelligent government and loving guardianship. The highest and the lowest, the weakest and the strongest shall alike rejoice in the security of all, through righteous supervision and unerring judgment; and earth shall cease to hear the groans of the prisoner, or the sobs of the slave.

5. But *the large and full outpouring of the* HOLY GHOST demands special notice in connection with the removal of the curse. Indeed, His is the mighty and effectual energy by which this great result in its fulness and universality will alone be accomplished. If through the shed blood and per-

fect satisfaction of Him who was made a curse for us, the way for the extinction of the curse has been fully opened, still the application of the blessing to the heart of the sinner and to the condition and circumstances both of himself and of the world he dwells in, rests with the Holy Spirit who alone can take of Christ's and shew it unto us. His great work in that day will be the abundant and almost universal conversion of the inhabitants of the earth. I say, *almost* universal; because, as I shall probably notice hereafter, it would seem as if the contrast of sin and holiness would still be allowed to exist, though not with the slightest evil consequences to any besides *the sinner*.

Throughout, therefore, there will be the deep current of reconciliation and love. Peace with God will be the abiding condition of His happy servants. Grace will be the spring of all excellence; and fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ will be the soul of all life. How wonderful must be the influence of such universal principles on all human intercourse! What an unfailing diffusion of blessing through every channel of human communication! Character not merely virtuous and moral in the world's sense; but sanctified and pervaded by the light and love of God. How will *self* be subjected, in *Christian*

amiability, and devotion for Christ's sake, to the service of others! How will confidence take the place of suspicion, and transparency of disguise! how will humility be real! and pride and jealousy and envy be lost in the deep and sincere admiration of the gifts and graces discerned in others! The necessary duties of that condition, for I anticipate no mere contemplative inertness, or existence of inactive vision, will all be in close relation to a heavenly mind; and deep fellowship in heavenly realities will be the charm of association in outward things, and consecrate all intercourse in ordinary employments. Unity of interest and unity of purpose, without paroxysms of excitement and intervals of indifference, stimulated by no unholy ambition, and retarded by no weariness or disgust, will animate alike families, communities, and nations; and above all *one faith*, without heart-burnings and dissensions, from a clear understanding and loving heart, will combine, in pure worship and the spiritual use of an intelligent ceremonial, people of all climes and countries, of all classes and conditions.

In short, we have only to recall, each in his peculiar circumstances, that which embitters or annoys, that which vexes or disappoints us, any disadvantage we labour under, anything which impairs or prevents happiness, whatever interferes

with our purposes or opposes our inclinations, anything which we dislike in another, or hate or regret in ourselves, and we may conclude at once, that, whether the alteration needed be in ourselves or our circumstances, it will have been effected in the case of those from whom the curse will be removed; and the conception thus with a little effort becomes comparatively easy, of the joy and blessing of that promised condition. Every hour will come laden with its enjoyment, and disappointment will be impossible. Not the slightest care or anxiety will ever exist for the *future*. Each will feel certain of the welfare of all he loves, in his sight or out of it, far or near. Whatsoever is done will fully answer its purpose, and succeed to the amount of our most sanguine desires. The enjoyment of mutual intercourse, now so often marred, will be perfect; intrusion will not annoy, and dislike will not repel, and caprice will not injure; all will be sunshine, because all will be love.

6. But I must not omit here the special connection of *the Jewish people* with our present subject. Never has there been a name more bound up with blessing; never one more closely linked with a curse. But He that delighteth in mercy has already determined the issue; and not only shall He speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and give her double for all her sin; but in Abraham's

seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed, and the Gentiles beholding Israel's glory, shall acknowledge that people to be the channel of their own. Then shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and Zion shall be an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations. Then shall the shout go forth from Jewish lips, "God shall bless us;" and as the covenanted fruit of that blessing, "All the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

7. But we have farther to consider *the effect upon creation at large,* when it shall come under the blessing.

(1.) And first I observe, that *Satan will be shut out both from the earth and the air.* If we may judge from some intimations given us in the Word of God concerning that mischievous spirit, called as he is the prince of the power of the air, and working as he evidently did in Job's case in perfect consistency with that character, I am disposed to believe that he may be more instrumental than many imagine in causing the elemental disturbances which afflict our world. Inclined as I feel always to believe *simply* the statements of Scripture, I understand that he inhabits the air with his legions, and roams over the earth in search of mischief and for prey. And however either cholera on the one hand, or atmospheric blight on

the other, may be rightly accounted for from natural causes, and both justly traced to the providence of God, yet we may be sure the devil takes pleasure in the evil effected, and may feel scarcely less certain that he cheerfully and diligently works in it all, up to the point of the permission given him. In the day however of the coming renewal all this will be at an end. Shut up in the bottomless pit, and the earth he laboured to mar becoming thus his prison-house, he will be impotent for evil beyond the walls of his own dungeon; while heaven and earth reflect each other's beauty, and only exchange their influences for mutual blessings.

(2.) In accordance with this, *the inanimate creation will return to the fulness of its use and beauty.* It was at first *all* very good, and every part of it will again minister either to man's necessities or enjoyments. Its disfigurements and its blemishes will be removed. The thorn and the brier, the original seals of its curse, will pass away: the plague and the pestilence, the storm and the hurricane, will no longer lie in wait to destroy, or burst in ruin upon his head: the moon shall give her light as the sun, and yet not smite by night: the light of the sun shall be sevenfold more glorious, and yet not smite by day: the fir-tree and the myrtle-tree, the box and the cedar, shall clothe the barren places with beauty, and the waste places

with comeliness; while plenteousness shall crown the valleys, and fruitfulness make the fields to sing.

(3.) Moreover in that day *brutish instincts shall be assimilated to human amiabilities,* and the beast of prey forego his usual food for the plain and simple nourishment of the ox and of the ass. But why attempt any other description of these scenes of blessing than that which the inspired word itself supplies: "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. . . . And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerer shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful." (Is. xxxii. 1—5.) "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. . . . No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon." (Is. xxxv.) "I will plant in the wilderness the

cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together." (Is. xli.) "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Is. lv.) The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Is. xi.)

Many other passages might be quoted; those especially which describe the glory and prosperity of Jerusalem and the Jews are numberless: but even in these it will be found that the blessing of *the whole earth* is most distinctly implied, seeing that the wealth of the Gentiles is to be continually poured into the holy city, and their highest privilege will be to contribute of their abundance and treasures to the glory of Israel.

(4.) *The relation between the earth and its inhabitants,* as it will then exist, is not to be overlooked as another feature in the removal of the curse. They will eat of it in joy and not in sorrow; their ploughing shall be in hope, which cannot be disappointed, and their reaping in plenteousness for satisfying and blessing. All the creatures of God shall minister to the good of him whom they obey; and he shall use and treat them all lawfully, temperately, lovingly. Great will be the contrast which will then exist in the condition of the *animal creation.* Deep have been the groanings in the ears of the Most High of those creatures of His hand, as they have felt man's cruelty, and uttered their testimony to his flagrant unmercifulness. But instead of the abuse and the stripes of this present evil time, they shall then know the law of kindness and the rule of gentleness; fear shall give place to affection, and terror to familiarity; and man shall gather to himself all the love a lower creation can yield by its instincts, while *he* renders up the highest and the best from a gracious soul and a sanctified understanding to the Lord of all life and the author of all blessing.

(5.) *The enjoyment to be rendered by creation to its renewed inhabitants* should hardly be overlooked. The treasures it has yielded to his researches have hitherto been proverbially his curse; and the ex-

ercise of his reason, and taste, and intelligence upon its infinite variety of objects, has hitherto been too often accompanied with contempt for the great artificer, and the proud indulgence of self-worship. His discoveries have been pressed into the service of sin, and the use of the creature has been systematically severed from the acknowledgment of the Creator. But it can be so then no longer. The eye that has been delivered from its blindness, corrected and strengthened in its vision, will only trace more deeply in everything, as it sees it more distinctly, the same surpassing wisdom and unchangeable goodness. The taste, the imagination, the fancy, then the *sanctified* gifts of His wonderful contrivance, will discern in all their objects the fitness which He has given, and the beauty which He has infused. As some in turn, from every nation and every land, traverse the earth year by year in their journey to Jerusalem, how will their path teem with objects of richest enjoyment, and their travel yield at every step fresh and inexhaustible delight. Nor will any satisfaction thus received be checked by the intruding thought that beneath this surface of beauty lurks moral vileness or corroding care; but the conviction will be ever present that these scenes are pervaded by joy, and peace, and holiness, and that the deep harmony of the regenerate soul is

blended with every sweet sound, which nature, renewed and blessed, sends up to God.

(6.) Thus will the *mighty chain of blessing* be completed, encircling in its vast sweep of mercy, and goodness, and grace, all holy intelligences, and all the redeemed and renovated works of God. Earth in its beauty, and peace, and fruitfulness, shall look smiling on the face of heaven, and sing her hymn of blessing. The nations of the world shall mingle their thanksgivings with her song, and present their praises and earth's offerings, the precious fruits of blessing, within the gates of Jerusalem amongst the tribes of the Lord. Israel, a nation of priests, in their own temple and in the light of the New Jerusalem, shall unceasingly bless the King who blesseth them out of Zion. Angel hosts, with fresh bursting joy shall worship around the new-set throne of the First Begotten; and all shall be crowned with the blessing, and rejoice in the light of those *most blessed and holy* ones, who have part in the first resurrection, and are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Then shall all blessing return in its universal hallelujahs unto its Author and its End; and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that are in them shall say, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be

unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

V. It is quite in character with these lectures, of which the intention is to enlarge our information, as well as to confirm our belief in received truth, that I should here advert to one or two *difficulties* connected with our subject.

1. *Sin and its punishment, desolation and death,* appear to exist partially during the thousand years, which seems at variance with the statements of such extended and universal felicity.

For instance, it is written, "The child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Again, the punishment of those *nations* is predicted who come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles; and a special visitation is foretold to Egypt, because her peculiar circumstances would exempt that land from the ordinary one.

Still farther, the desolation and curse of one portion of the earth, the land of Idumea, is declared to be perpetual, and is thus described (Isa. xxxiv.): "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day: the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to

generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness." (See the whole chapter.)

I confess, however, that I see no difficulty in dealing with these passages. The holiness and prosperity and peace which are to *cover the earth* are most clearly stated in God's Word. The above passages are also equally plain. And these statements are reconcileable with each other as well as with other representations of the Word of God. The authority of our Lord will be universal; but it has been His uniform method to allow the existence of contrast. Sin was not excluded from heaven, or impossible among the angels. But even the fact of contrast cannot be all that is sought in the permission of such a state of things. It has doubtless also to do with the demonstration of *creature responsibility* on the one hand, as well as of *creature insufficiency* on the other; both these being points of undeniable truth, and of immeasurable moment also, standing as they do in close relation to the infinite character and perfections of our God. It would seem therefore that it is clearly God's will that these two great principles (creature responsibility and creature insufficiency) should be in all

cases and at all times represented and demonstrated to the universe;—that there is a moral necessity for it, and a moral benefit in it which He understands, and upon which He acts;—that, as the lake of fire is to be an eternal contrast within the limits of a blessed universe, so, during the millennial glory, there will be evidence on this earth of righteous infliction for disobedience, and deserved suffering for sin; and that it is but man's sickly notion of propriety, which would charge God's work with imperfection and His arrangements with defect, because the existence of such phenomena is still permitted. Men, be it remembered, will still be in a state of probation, and it seems they are to be dealt with still as individuals and as nations. No coercion is to make them holy, nor is a monotony of righteousness to be obtained by the annihilation of holy preference or the compulsory choice of the service of God. The instances which have been adduced of transgression and death are after all but limited exceptions to a universal rule. While lengthened promises and predictions of the holiness and the glory are given again and again, it is but in two or three passages that any contrast to that condition is intimated; so that after all it may be only now and then that the sinner may be met with; and some once or twice in the millennary, perhaps only towards the close of it, that a nation may be

found weary of service, or intolerant of authority. And even then, under the rule of Christ, and the administration of the risen saints, and the service of angels, in the absence moreover of all wicked spirits to promote disaffection and foster rebellion, every assurance is given that evil cannot spread beyond the subjects of it, and that any extension of the mischief to the innocent and happy is not to be apprehended for a moment. Indeed the only text which I remember as alluding to death in the millennium—a text already quoted above,—implies the righteous infliction of punishment on any that dare to transgress, summary as it would seem and instant, something like that which occurred under the former theocracy of Israel. A translator, entirely unprejudiced, at least in favour of our views, gives as the more accurate sense of the Hebrew, "He shall be reckoned a child who dies a hundred years old; and he that fails of reaching a hundred years shall be considered as taken off by God's special judgment:" or in other words, "Death at the age of a hundred years will be reckoned altogether premature and extraordinary; and can only result from special punishment inflicted for sin." I am not aware that death under any other circumstances is anywhere stated or implied during the millennium, though no information is given as far as I know as to what becomes of the

righteous and holy. Probably some may be translated like Enoch, and the rest may live on like Methuselah and the other antediluvian patriarchs to the end of the millennial dispensation, by which time doubtless farther information will be afforded.

2. *The death of animals in sacrifice* has been considered by many as implying that the curse remains during the period in question; and has been urged therefore on the one hand to the disparagement of its happiness, and on the other as a ground for rejecting a literal interpretation. I have already expressed my opinion largely on this point in a former sermon.* It may suffice therefore to say here, that the statement of the fact is far too distinct to admit of its being explained away; and that we are bound to know, that our capability of conceiving its consistency is in no way a prerequisite to our believing so plain a declaration. It would be quite possible to suppose a death without suffering; but is not even this a gratuitous supposition, and an attempt on our part to help the divine word out of a difficulty, which exists only in our apprehension? I have urged already that God has the most perfect right over all His creatures; and I cannot understand that the removal of the curse would be any the less

* See Bloomsbury Lectures for 1850, p. 88.

complete, because it should please Him, *by means of animal sacrifices,* to keep before the eyes of His people in the flesh, for their education, the suffering and death from which they have been delivered, and a continual memorial of that most precious blood-shedding by which their redemption has been effected. So fully and simply do I believe that plainly predicted results must come to pass in spite of all apparent difficulties, that I am not disposed to argue the point farther.

3. *The outbreak at the end of the millennium,* which has created much difficulty in many minds, may I think be explained and accounted for, if it be not presumptuous to do so.

No one will be saved during that time except through grace and by personal faith; but it would appear that very few exceptions to such a blessed condition will exist at least for a long period. Towards the end it is very clear that merely nominal subjection will largely prevail, and that *nations* will be indisposed, for some cause or other, to comply with established regulations. Doubtless this will all be connected with the withdrawal, gradual or otherwise, of God's grace; and thus the nations will be prepared for the combination, which it only needs the devil to organize. At the same time it does not appear that the watchful eye and arm of Israel's King allows them to do anything

else than precipitate their own destruction, and thus become the final instance of His signal and righteous vengeance; while, by the very permission of this outbreak and confederacy, He only sets His seal to man's natural tendency to rebellion and corruption, and gives a final and summary demonstration, that even millennial glory has not been the result of example merely, or sympathy, or any innate amelioration, but altogether, as in the case of every past and present conversion, the fruit of *His* free infinite unmerited *grace*.

4. It may be well that I should spend a few more words here on *the comparative blessedness and glory of the millennium, and on the eternal state which is to succeed*. That the latter should be much greater than the former is according to all analogy. The circumstance of men being still in the flesh and in a state of probation we should hardly suppose would continue in any ultimate state, though after all it is not worth while, because utterly useless, to speculate on what is not revealed. But there are points of weighty bearing which strongly forbid us to disparage the millennium merely because that which succeeds will be more glorious. Leaving out of the question Rev. xxi. and xxii., the application of which to the thousand years is doubted by many, the features are abundant notwithstanding, which prove the al-

most boundless glory of that period. Some of these may be briefly enumerated.

Christ will then be personally present *for the first time* to all His saints, both those risen, and those in the flesh, the King for so many ages desired and longed for.

It will be the special period of His triumph as the *second Adam*, in the retrieval and restitution of our lost inheritance.

The saints in the resurrection-life will administer the government of the earth, and converse and be familiar with its inhabitants.

The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife is ready, at the beginning of this period.

The knowledge of the Lord shall during this time cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

"From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same His name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place shall incense be offered unto His name, and a pure offering."

In short, as the curse and the ruin have been permitted to take place on this earth, so the millennium will be the special period of God's vindication of His wisdom and power in the permission first, and the recovery afterwards. Nor is there, in all this, but *comparative* glory. All these are magnificent facts and magnificent achievements: they involve stupendous manifestations: they are

full of unspeakable honour to our God; and as, in the conversion of a sinner, whatever advances may be subsequently made, the transition from darkness to light is infinitely greater than the difference between any two subsequent points of progress, so will the ushering in of the First-Begotten into the world as its regenerator and restorer in His personal presence and glory, be to that world an infinitely greater contrast to its previous darkness and sin, than any subsequent advances in light and holiness can be to this its new birth and fresh awakening.

A few remarks must close our subject.

1. *If the removal of the curse had not been matter of prediction and promise, we could scarcely have believed it possible.* All the efforts of man towards the regeneration of the world, including his discoveries and inventions, moral or otherwise, are only proving more distinctly the utter hopelessness of his condition, if its remedy is to depend on himself. And this confirms most fully the truth of God's statement as to the real cause of all our misery. The curse is not one of circumstances, but lies deep in the elements of our being. Were it not for this, there is beauty enough, and goodness enough, and material enough in the world about us, even in its fallen condition, to afford large comfort and abundant enjoyment. But hea-

ven itself must fail to bless any soul unreconciled to its God.

2. And hence we may remark, that *not re-creation but regeneration,* not physical power but spiritual influence, or in other words, *grace,* is *needed to rectify the ruined state of all things.* And thus even now, the glory of being man's highest blessing belongs to the *precious Gospel,* foolishness though it be to the Greek, and a stumbling-block to the Jew. *This* even now heals and blesses the springs of man's being. This presents to him a free forgiveness through the blood of sprinkling for present peace, and a hope that maketh not ashamed as his earnest of future glory. This to his eye clothes the earth with light and creation with beauty; and even with bare walls and on a bed of suffering, with spare clothing and a scanty morsel, life is no burden and his sighs are not murmurs, for he is happy in a Father's love, and rests a reconciled heart upon a Father's bosom.

3. And here we may well ask, *whether,* although the curse cannot be yet removed, *much more is not attainable towards remedying its evil* by individual Christians, in our families, and in the world? What is utterly impossible to the children of darkness, is possible to the children of light. *Evangelical* truth, the truth of the *pure and simple Gospel*

of God's grace, wherever it is fully and rightly brought to bear, in our villages, towns, parishes, schools, workhouses, gaols, is even now omnipotent. Search any place where there is such a faithful ministry, (and your own parish is an instance,) and from time to time the mightiest transformations will be found to occur. Witness the influence which surrounds the life of one man of religious decision and steady consistency, and the homage often rendered to such an example, from the blessings acknowledged to be received through means of it, by the world about him. Surely then, though we cannot accelerate the actual period of the coming glory, we ought at least, possessing as we do an instrumentality of such certain power, to use it earnestly and unceasingly for the mitigation of existing evil. And no effort of this kind shall be lost; while even the least blessing the Gospel confers through the weakest instrument is of incalculable worth and of enduring preciousness.

4. These remarks lead to another. *The curse was in connection with the tree of knowledge; the blessing* shall be in connection with the *tree of life.* (Rev. xxii. 2.) A lesson for us in our present dwelling place. We may search into the depths of the *knowledge* of God, and succeed in *knowing* many mysteries, but it is mere groping in dark-

ness unless we begin with *life*. The fruit of this tree must first be tasted, or we shall only *know* to our confusion. Christ once our life, and all the unsearchable riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God will then enrich the soul with the ever-widening fulness of blessing.

5. I remind you from our subject that *materiality is not necessarily connected with sin*. Such a notion seems almost insensibly to prevail with some, and thus at once to place a bar before their reception of the plainest statements of the Word of God in reference to the restitution of all things. Every thing, however, proves the contrary, and shews us, as we have before observed, that God was not shut up to the alternative of *abandonment*, in removing from creation its curse. But I need not dwell on a topic which the able mind of a Chalmers has handled with such singular power and felicity.

6. One important inference I feel entitled to draw from what has been advanced, I mean *the necessity*, as it appears to me, *of the premillennial personal advent of our Lord, and His reign in glory over this earth*. It was to the *first* ADAM, as the head and representative of his posterity, that the dominion of this world was originally assigned; and, whatever might be the interval, he exercised that dominion, till he fell and the curse came in

with its confusion and ruin. Christ hath fulfilled the redemption from the curse, and is the head of His body, the Church; but surely His *second Adam* character must be fairly and reasonably expected to correspond more closely than this, to him who was His type and figure. Surely, it is but according to analogy, that this earth in its renewed and restored glory should be under the presidency of some Adam-head. And, precisely in accordance with this, our Emmanuel, Christ Jesus, is declared to be the *second Adam,* the Lord *from* heaven;—the world to come, that is, the earth in its regenerated condition, is declared by the Apostle to be specially subjected to Him;—the eighth and seventy-second Psalms are graphically descriptive of His restored kingdom;—and many other passages as distinctly declare, if language is not to be tortured, His *presence* in His dominions, when He shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously, and all nations shall come up from the ends of the earth to present to Him their offerings, and to worship their King. Thus will the purpose of God, as originally intimated and declared, be not even partially abandoned; but, interrupted for a season through the weakness and fallibility of the creature, realize in the subsequent redemption of the God-Man that endowment of stability, with which the first crea-

tion failed to invest it. So shall God reconcile all things to Himself by JESUS CHRIST; so shall He head up all things in HIM.

7. We remark in conclusion, how important an element the promised removal of the curse ought to form *in the comfort and encouragement* of the true Christian; and with what eagerness amidst labour and suffering, disease and death, he ought to watch and long for its approach! The rays of light which still linger amidst this earth's curse and ruin, are to the world the setting of its sun, but to the children of God the daybreak of their glory. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, all that is lovely dies; the world passeth away and the fashion thereof, and they that love it shall perish with it. But the *Word of the Lord* endureth for ever. And as in bending over the dust of many dear ones departed in the Lord, we know that amidst that corruption there lies safely hidden the indestructible germ of a resurrection life, so amidst the wear and decrepitude and decay of this old universe, is the promise of *that word* the imperishable germ of the unfading life and beauty in which it shall be mantled on the morning of its redemption, the day of the espousals of its King.

And would you know what will be your portion in all this? Listen. Are ye *poor in spirit?* are ye *mourners?* are ye *meek?* are ye *hungering and*

thirsting after righteousness? are ye *merciful?* are ye *pure in heart?* are ye *peacemakers?* are ye *persecuted for righteousness' sake?* are ye *falsely reviled for* CHRIST'S *sake?* Then for *you* there is *no more curse.* Listen again to the words of Him you love and look for. "*Blessed* are ye: for *yours* is the kingdom of heaven:—*you* shall be comforted:—*you* shall inherit the earth:—*you* shall be filled:—*you* shall obtain mercy:—*you* shall see God:—*you* shall be called the children of God:—*yours* is the kingdom of heaven." Rejoice then and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.

O Lord God of Hosts, "Thy *blessing* is upon Thy people." AMEN.

LECTURE VIII.*

THE PERFECT EQUITY OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

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ISAIAH XI. 5.

"*And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.*"

JEREMIAH XXIII. 5.

"*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.*

THERE is no attribute of God which produces such opposite emotions as his justice. It is the terror

* This sermon, having been written for the press after delivery, will be probably found to differ slightly in style and language from that actually preached.

of the rebel and the joy of the child of God; the dread of the unconverted sinner and the delight of the justified believer; the source of perpetual uneasiness to those who are stung by sin, but have not yet found a pardon; and at the same time the sure foundation of unshaken peace to those who know that every claim has been more than satisfied by the atoning work of their redeeming Lord. To the man without atonement the justice of God involves the certainty of death, but to the man resting in atonement it conveys no less certain assurance of life and peace. In the one case, it is justly dreaded because it passes the law's sentence against all who have sinned against the law's requirements; but in the other it is the pledge of everlasting safety, for the believer may plead that the broken law has been amply satisfied, and may therefore rest in the assurance of the text, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

As there is this vast difference in the present aspect of God's equity when beheld by the two great classes of mankind, so it is clear that there must be the same difference in the thoughts entertained by them with reference to the future coming of the Lord in glory. Unconverted sinners, being condemned by his equity, can do nothing but tremble when they realize the prospect of his appearing;

whereas, justified believers, being safe from condemnation, can look forward with unfettered joy to the blessed hope of their Redeemer's reign. To the one the Lord brings darkness, and to the other light; so that the one class will be ready at his coming to cry aloud to the rocks and mountains in the fearful language described in the latter part of the 6th chapter of Revelation: "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:" while the whole vast company of God's ransomed saints, accepted in the Lord's righteousness, and perfectly safe in his unchangeable fidelity, can lift up their heads in cheerful hope, and say, "Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."

It must be the longing desire of every awakened heart to be able with well-grounded confidence to join in that delightful hymn, and in the hope that we may all be found ready when the day dawns; it is well for us to study the perfect equity of our Saviour's coming kingdom. Let us then examine, I. The Attribute; II. The Prince; and III. The Administration; and may God's Holy Spirit be with us! May he teach us to understand his own

word, and profit from it! May he so work in all our hearts, that we may be ready to welcome with unspeakable joy the glorious advent of our great God and Saviour Christ!

I. The Attribute. By perfect equity we must understand the perfect fulfilment of the perfect law of God. Men sometimes speak as though believers had altogether done with the law of God, but nothing can be further from the whole spirit and language of the Scriptures. It is indeed perfectly true that the child of God has wholly done with the law as a system of life and justification; for the law can command, the law can condemn, but the law has no power to pardon, to justify, or to save, so that all our hope of eternal life depends upon the fact, that "we are not under the law, but under grace." But at the same time, we must not suppose for a single moment, that as children of God we are to set aside the law; for the whole course of God's dealings have tended to do it honour, and the grand purpose of his successive dispensations has been to combine the two apparent opposites, the exaltation of the law and the salvation of the sinner. The first prophecy, given in connection with the first sentence of condemnation, predicted the atonement, and so shadowed out the future homage to be rendered by the seed of the woman to the law. Abel's sacrifice was of

the same character, and shewed that in those early days the principle was established, that the law must be obeyed, or its claim satisfied. The same great truth was taught more fully in the Mosaic dispensation. The principle of sacrifice was there arranged and perfected, and the countless lambs that bled before the altar were so many witnesses to the unchanging authority of God's holy law; till at length, when the Saviour came, the same truth was taught in all its fulness, for he himself declared in the first place, that not one jot or one tittle should pass till all be fulfilled, and then sealed his testimony with his blood, proving by his own crucifixion that it was altogether impossible for the perfect law of a perfect God to be set aside. So from that time the Holy Spirit has been magnifying the law. He has been writing it on the hearts of God's elect people, and raising them from the deep corruption of their nature to its holy and unblemished purity. He transforms them into the likeness of the Lord, and by the application of divine grace to the heart produces the mighty effect described in Rom. viii. 4: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Now as the honour done by the law has thus been more and more clearly developed from the first hour that it was broken in the fall, we are led

to expect the full and complete exhibition of its perfect holiness when the whole of the present dispensation shall be run out, and the time of restitution come in at the glorious appearing of our blessed Lord. Then it will be honoured, not as hitherto, by the sacrifice of atonement, but by universal peace as the result of universal equity. Then it will be obeyed, not as now, by the defective efforts of an election of grace, of a little company in the midst of a wicked world, but universally and perfectly by all the hosts of heaven, and all the inhabitants of earth. When such is the case, there will be perfect equity, for that law is perfect, reflecting the mind and character of God. It is the spirit of God written out in language, the very thoughts of God expressed to man. When it therefore is displayed in all its beauty,—when every impediment to perfect obedience is removed, and every opposing power bound, earth will become like heaven; and a perfect equity will result as a certain consequence from a perfect conformity to the will of God.

It is important, however, to remember that the manifestation of the law can never set aside the sovereignty of God. As the giver of every good and perfect gift, he preserves throughout his own prerogatives. It would be in violation of his word, and therefore destructive of his equity, if he were

to permit one sin to pass unpunished, or one judicial sentence to be left unexecuted on the sinner. But on the other hand, there is no limit to his munificence, and he may bestow his own gifts according to the abundance of his sovereign grace. Our Lord has taught us this very clearly in the parable of the labourers, as given in Matt. xx. It seems to be his object to shew in that parable the beautiful union between equity and sovereignty, and to point out that a perfect justice allows full scope to the freest exercise of holy love. None can be wronged, for that would be contrary to justice, and therefore he says to the early labourer, "I do thee no wrong;" but multitudes may be blessed exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, for there is no law and no decree which can ever place the smallest limit on the unbounded exercise of his unfettered and unfathomable love, and therefore he says of his liberality to the later labourers, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

II. The Prince. It is clear that every characteristic of the kingdom must depend entirely on the character and attributes of the Son of man, the ruling King. He is the one centre from which every ray of light must radiate, so that from the study of his perfections we learn immediately his people's joys. To illustrate this truth appears to

have been the object of selecting the two passages appointed as the text; for while that in Jeremiah describes the equity of the government: "He shall execute judgment and justice on the earth;" that in Isaiah directs our attention to the Lord's personal character, and teaches that "righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." The girdle is thought by some to have been one of the emblems of eastern royalty, and if so, the passage shews how closely the equity of his kingdom is connected with the equity of his character, for righteousness is bound around him as the stay of his strength and the emblem of his power.

Accordingly we find in our blessed Saviour every qualification for the perfect administration of a perfect kingdom.

1. There is in himself a perfect *love* for the whole will of God. He has been from eternity one with God, and his will is the will of God. There has been in him from the beginning an unmixed delight in God's equity, and it is in consequence of that delight that it has pleased the Father to appoint him to the kingdom. Again and again are we assured that he holds his sceptre by God's appointment, and has received his authority with the sanction of God's anointing. Nay, more. We are permitted as it were to gain something of an

insight into the secret purposes of that eternal decree, and are told that his love for holiness was his qualifying attribute for the sovereignty. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Psa. xlv. 6, 7.

2. A second qualification is taught as in the passage quoted from Isaiah, viz., the perfect *knowledge* of the Prince of Peace.

It is very clear that such knowledge is quite essential to the perfect administration of a universal government, for within the limited sphere of merely human jurisprudence, the cause of justice is perpetually impeded by the want of it. A monarch may feel every possible desire for the perfect equity of his kingdom, but there may be countless instances of cruel wrong which must remain unredressed and undiscovered. So again, a judge may desire above everything that his decision should be just, but through the limitation of his knowledge he may be unable to ascertain the facts, and his judgment after all be found erroneous. But knowledge will be perfect in the coming kingdom. There will be unerring wisdom in the reigning Lord, and this shall be accompanied by a perfect acquaintance with all over whom he reigns; for

the prophecy declares, "The spirit of wisdom and understanding shall rest upon him, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord." Nor will he be guided, as we must ever be, by outward appearances or circumstantial proofs, for the present workings, as well as the past history of each heart, will be naked and open before his view; the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him shall give him discernment into the invisible secrets of the countless multitudes subject to his sway, so that, according to verse 3, the Spirit "shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears;" *i. e.*, he will not merely look on the surface of society, being dependent on evidence, or influenced by reports; but the whole will be transparent at a glance, so that, according to the following verse, "With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth."

3. A third qualification for this perfect government is his *power*.

An earthly sovereign may have the utmost desire to establish perfect equity in his kingdom, but he requires power before he can carry into effect his purpose. Knowledge may acquaint him with the facts, wisdom may guide him in his principles,

the love of truth may kindle in his soul the longing desire for what is just and true, but if there be not power, his arm is paralyzed, and lawless opponents may overturn his kingdom. There is, therefore, something very glorious in the thought, that, as in the Prince there can be no injustice, so in the subjects there can be no resistance. We know that even at this present time, "angels, principalities, and powers are made subject unto him." But still he now permits resistance. Satan is still honoured as the God of this world, and wicked men are still living in rebellion against the Lord. But it will not be so then. The power now possessed will be made manifest; the sword now in its scabbard will be unsheathed; Satan himself will be bound and helpless, and every enemy will be cast under the feet of the Lord Jesus. "He will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips will he slay the wicked," while the glorious hymn shall swell up from the vast multitude around the throne, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, because thou hast taken unto thee thy great power and hast reigned."

4. But there is one other qualification for a perfect ruler, which we must not omit to notice, as it is especially referred to in the Scriptures. I mean the *human sympathy* of the Son of man.

There is no greater joy to the children of God,

than the perfect humanity of their blessed Saviour. It is his real and perfect manhood which enables us to go boldly to the throne of grace, in the full assurance that we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We need not look for the human sympathy of the Virgin and the saints, for we have all, and more than all that can be needed, in the perfect humanity of the man Christ Jesus, the one mediator between God and man. Are there any here who have been bowed down by the broken heart or shed the tear of bitter sorrow? You have the joy of knowing that your Priest has wept by the grave, and passed through the agony of Gethsemane. But the blessings of the Lord's perfect manhood are not limited to the single office of his advocacy; for when we look forward to his glorious appearing, to the throne of the last day, with the solemn awe which will accompany the last great sentence for eternity, we may rest in the assurance that we shall stand before one who has felt the burden of human trial and known the workings of the human heart. In this sympathy we have the sure pledge of his perfect equity. The glorious King will combine human experience with divine omniscience: he will be flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, experienced in our trials, and acquainted with all our cares. He has grown in our

childhood, lived in our manhood, died in our death, and is therefore perfected by experience for the equitable government of our race. How greatly then must we adore the tenderness of God's perfect wisdom, when we find the manhood of our Lord described as one of the qualifications for his kingdom, as in his own remarkable words in which he said (John v. 27),—"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man!"

III. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM. As the personal equity of the reigning Lord is the subject of the verse selected from Isaiah, so the righteousness of his government appears to be particularly predicted in that taken from Jeremiah: "A king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice on the earth." This execution of God's holy law may be considered in its reference to three principal periods: the commencement, the progress, and the close of the kingdom.

1. The commencement. It has pleased God to permit that in the present state of society there should be a mixture of the children of God with the people of the world. The tares grow with the wheat, and we cannot separate them. The church dwells with the world, and the world, alas! too often obtains a footing within the church. The result of all this is, that the human standard of

character is adopted, while God's estimate is almost disregarded in common life. The great, the noble, the talented, and the ambitious, court the world's smiles and win them; while the meek and lowly believer is often, like his divine Master, despised and rejected amongst men. It is clear, therefore, that in the introduction of a reign of perfect equity there must be a complete overturn of all the world's arrangements. If the saints are to take the kingdom, they must be separated from the surrounding mass, and raised by the Lord's own hand to honour. There must be an accurate separation of the precious from the vile—a separation between persons as well as characters; a separation extending to every grade of society, and gathering God's elect from the fields, the courts, the churches, and even from the most sacred privacies of their homes. How wonderful is the thought that such a separation will be accomplished with the strictest equity, so that none will be taken that should be left, nor any left which should be taken to the joy of their Lord!

But more than that! It is very clear from Scripture that there are different offices and various degrees of glory to be expected on the Lord's return. We read of the prophet's reward and the righteous man's reward. We are told moreover in the parable of the servants (Luke xix. 12, &c.), that

there was a double separation on the nobleman's return. The citizens who rejected his authority were separated from his servants, and afterwards within his family there was variety in the distribution of his gifts. One had ten cities, and the other five, though both, according to the corresponding parable in St. Matthew, were welcomed by their Master, and bidden enter into the joy of their Lord. Thanks be to God, if when that day dawns he honours us with the sacred privilege of acting as door-keepers in his holy temple! But how can we enough admire the wonders of that equity, which in perfect wisdom shall appoint to each individual his place. There will be the noble army of prophets, martyrs and apostles, men who have counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might finish their course and complete their ministry. There will be the vast multitude which no man can number before the throne, including the whole of God's elect who in every age and every nation have been summoned to their rest. There will be the widely scattered company of living saints, found in their work when the trumpet sounds. There will be some present on that day who have borne the burden and heat of a long-continued conflict with sin, some fearless martyrs, some patient sufferers, some indefatigable labourers, and some little infants wafted without a struggle

to their Father's home: some gathered out from the humblest cottages, and some who in their day were trusted with the responsibility of the throne. But such will be the equity, such the heart discerning wisdom, such the indisputable sense of right, and such the overflowing love in the distribution of God's countless gifts, that every individual of that varied and countless multitude shall add his cheerful voice to the thankful hymn,— "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints." (Rev. xv. 3.)

2. The progress of the kingdom. The descriptions selected from the prophets describe not merely an adjustment of the kingdom at the advent, but the continuance of an equitable reign. Jeremiah says that "a king shall reign and prosper," whereas Isaiah adds that "his rest shall be glorious." We are to look forward therefore to a continued period of peace and blessedness under the immediate government of our glorious Lord. There will be countless saints engaged in the execution of his purpose, as angels are now employed to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation; but human passions will have disappeared, for all will be transformed into the likeness of their Head; and just as we see the light of the moon reflected from ten thousand ripples on the calm surface of

the evening sea, so shall we see the Lord's perfect character reflected by ten thousand times ten thousand happy saints in the perfect administration of his perfect rule.

Oh! what a contrast is there between the bright prospects of such a picture, and the present injustice of a disorganized and distracted world! Now the world groans with wrongs, many of which are wilfully inflicted. There are multitudes of miserable victims groaning at this very moment in the prisons of Naples, and in the dungeons of the Romish inquisition. Popery and despotism are stalking across Europe, and the banner of free America still waves over three million slaves. But besides all this, there are countless wrongs for which it is beyond human power to find a remedy. Even in our own happy country, where, from the Queen downwards, there is found the almost universal desire that the laws should be just and their administration equal,—even in England, so happy, so favoured, and so free, as through God's great mercy we still behold her, how many are the pitiable cases of mournful but irremediable wrong! How many widows are there trampled under foot! how many sweet children robbed of their heritage! and how many at this very moment wandering in these very streets compelled to starve or to steal at our doors, while we repose in the lap of luxury within

a peaceful and comfortable home! But nothing that man can do can cure the evil, and man's best efforts will sometimes only add to it; for the fact is, that it is not the result of defective legislation, but has its root incomparably deeper, viz., in the desperate ruin of the whole human race through the fall. Nor can there be a cure till the day of restitution dawns. A ruined world can never be the scene of universal peace; but a restored world under the government of the Restorer may. And so the prophecies teach us that it will. When He reigns all will be peace, for there shall be no curse (Rev. xxii. 3); no more death (Rev. xxi. 4); no more tears (*Ibid.*); no more hunger (Rev. vii. 16): no more disputing (Isa. xi. 6, &c.), and no more neglected poverty (Isa. xi. 4): but all shall give place to the peaceful enjoyment of universal equity and unfettered love: for "judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." (Isa. xxxii. 16, 17.)

3. But we must pass on to the close of the kingdom. That there will be a close seems plain from the language of St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 24. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;

when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

Nor are we left in ignorance as to the particulars of that most solemn day, for then, according to Rev. xx. 11, &c., will be the hour for the last resurrection and the second death. Then every body still in the grave shall be raised, and the whole creation gathered before the throne; then the books shall be opened, the dead judged; and then shall take place the last great display of the perfect equity of the judgments of our God. Brethren! there is something overwhelming in the attempt to speak on such a subject. Are you and I to stand there on that day? are we then to hear God's sentence upon us? Is that sentence to be for all eternity? and what heart shall not be awed by the deep solemnity of such a prospect? But how marvellous and how awful will be the manifestation then made of God's unchanging righteousness! But can it be just, some men are found to argue, to cast the wicked into an eternal hell? Let the unconverted man himself answer the question. Were you not born under the law of God, and subject by creation to its authority? and has not that law been broken? But further, has there not been a perfect provision made for your recovery? a full propitiation made for your sin by the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God him-

self? an atonement followed up by the full, free, unfettered offer of eternal life and pardon to every guilty soul accepting it in Christ? Has not that divine offer been sent through God's word from God himself to you? But if so, and if that offer has been rejected—if that Lamb of God has been despised—if God's plan of pardon has been set aside; then, I ask, is it not justice, simple, clear, unquestionable justice, that the law should be left to take its course, that the sentence passed should be carried into execution, and that your lost and ruined soul should be for all eternity cut off from God?

But how will the equity of God bear upon those on the right hand of the throne? They too have sinned, and by them, as by others, has the holy law been broken. They are involved in the same transgression as those that perish, and how is it that the equity of God's government does not require that they too should fall under the same curse? Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! The same justice which condemns the one secures the other; and the same righteousness which casts the sinner without a Saviour into hell, pronounces the believer in the Saviour a saint in everlasting glory. But what righteousness can we plead, or what argument can we urge, to shew that we ought not to perish? We can never say, "We have not sinned,

and are not deeply guilty;" for we are all corrupt, and our own conscience overwhelms us with the recollection of our sin. But we can say that our punishment is past; that we have received at the Lord's hand the double for all our sins; that God himself in his eternal covenant appointed the Son as our representative, and that as our representative that blessed Redeemer has filled our place and endured our curse. Believers can urge, and that without the least possibility of contradiction, that as the Saviour was consecrated to his atoning work by God's eternal purpose, so the perfection of that work was sealed and ratified in his resurrection and exaltation; that the law has not been set aside, but fulfilled and honoured; that "God therefore may be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." They may therefore on that solemn day stand before the throne condemned and humbled at the recollection of their sin, but yet calmly, peacefully, and fearlessly appealing to God's justice for their acquittal; for they may look up even to him that sitteth on the throne, and may plead the promise of this very prophecy, which says, that "this is the name whereby he shall be called, 'the Lord our righteousness.'"

In what light then, brethren, do you regard the perfect equity of the coming kingdom? Is it to you the source of joy or fear? Does the

thought of God's unchangeable truth and justice bring peace or anxiety to your heart? Can your soul rest in the assurance that not one jot or one tittle of God's perfect law can pass away? or would you wish it slightly modified? The question clearly leads to the further enquiry, whether in the inmost depths of your soul you are really resting on the atonement. If there be the least hesitation on that point, the justice of God should produce overwhelming terror: but if you are satisfied on that one, great, cardinal truth of the Lord's gospel, then why fear? why doubt? why entertain misgivings? and why hesitate to lift up your heads and look forward joyfully to the coming of your Lord?

But if there be those here to whom the equity of God is no source of joy, but who are hoping in some indistinct manner to find a future salvation through his mercy, I would implore those brethren to think deeply of this most solemn truth. Depend upon it that God's word cannot be broken; that God will never depart from his own most perfect will; that God's law is irrevocable, and must be satisfied either by perfect obedience, or eternal punishment. Oh! may God grant, dear brethren, that every one of us may be found in Christ on that day, pardoned through his atonement, accepted in his righteousness, and able without a fear

to unite in the joyful hymn, "Let the floods clap their hands and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord: for he cometh; for he cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity!"

LECTURE IX.

THE UNCHANGEABLE STEDFASTNESS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY THE REV. T. WOODROOFFE,

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DANIEL VII. 14.

"*His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*"

"ALL thy works," says the Psalmist, "shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." (Psalm cxlv. 10—13.) Has not this Scripture, dear brethren, been fulfilled among you during these last few weeks? Your beloved

pastor has thought it conducive to your profit to invite your attention during this season of Lent to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The things pertaining to this kingdom were the subjects of our risen Lord's conversation with His disciples during the forty days which intervened between His resurrection and ascension; and they may well, therefore, have a large share of our thoughts and of our communications one with another. Several of the characteristic features of the kingdom have already been set before you, and others are yet to be considered. It is indeed a subject of wondrous extent which, in our present state, we can but *know in part* and speak in part: but standing as it were on the edge and gazing on the vast expanse before us with reverential awe and self-abasement, that, which the glorious God condescends to unfold to our view, will, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, strengthen our faith, elevate our affections, cheer our hearts, brighten our hope, and urge us onward in our course towards the inheritance of the saints.

Our subject this evening is the UNCHANGEABLE STEDFASTNESS OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST. May the Holy Ghost, the Glorifier of Christ, be showered down upon us from the Father of mercies for Jesus Christ's sake, and may the prayer ascend from every heart, "Be thou exalted, Lord, in

thine own strength, so will we sing, and praise thy power!"

As the Lord Jesus Christ unites in His own mysterious Person the natures of God and Man, and is not only the Creator of the world, but the Redeemer of fallen man, we may consider His Kingdom under two aspects. Under each of them we are taught in Scripture that it is unchangeably stedfast.

I. Contemplate His Kingdom as CREATOR. "As by him all things were made, and without him was not *anything* made that was made." (John i. 3.) "So by him all things consist." (Col. i. 17.) "And he upholds all things by the word of his power." (Heb. i. 3.) It is impossible to conceive any power more absolute than His, who spake them into existence, and who, if He pleased, could in an instant recall that existence. He has both possession of, and dominion over, all whether they be material, or animal, or human, or spiritual agents. The evidences of this power meet us at every point. The stated revolutions of the earth and planets, the succession and order of the seasons, the subordination of the lower animals to man, and their subserviency to his use and comfort, and the regularity and harmony which in some degree still exist in this sin-marred world, are so many puttings forth of the Almighty Creator's power.

Were His power, like that of the creature, limited either in extent or duration; were His dominion subject to the changes and accidents which affect the kingdoms of earthly origin, the universe might in a single instant become chaos and desolation. The continuance of all things according to Christ's ordinance, from generation to generation, undeniably proves the stedfastness of His kingdom in nature as the kingdom of the Almighty and Everliving God.

Liability to change and decay, is a law of the creature's existence: unchangeableness belongs only to the Creator. "I am the Lord, I change not." (Mal. iii. 6.) The glorious sun in the firmament has his parallaxes; but with the Everlasting Jehovah there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James i. 17.) Unchangeableness is the character of all His perfections, the centre in which they all meet. His purposes, His holiness, His love, His truth, His justice, His mercy, His power are ever the same, incapable of either diminution or addition. And as His perfections are, so must be His kingdom. To suppose otherwise, would be in thought to rob Him of His essential glory. And accordingly, the Psalmist, contrasting the transient character of the creature with the abiding and unchangeable nature of the Creator, says, "Of old hast thou laid the founda-

tion of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." (Psalm cii. 25—27.)

The same contrast might be drawn in relation to the social, or political, world. In every sense is it true, "The fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 31.) Crowns fall, thrones are removed, kingdoms and empires flourishing in the greatness of their boasted strength crumble to dust; "but to the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." (Heb. i. 8.) "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, *(margin,* a kingdom of all ages,) and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." To the Eternal and Co-equal Son then, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, does the universal Church in all ages raise its song of praise: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all." (1 Chron. xxix. 11.)

II. But let us turn from the kingdom of nature to the kingdom of grace, to that, with which our Lord Jesus Christ is invested as REDEEMER. Con-

sidered in this view also, His Kingdom is unchangeably stedfast.

1. In reference to this, *what saith the Scripture?* Its testimony is clear and decisive. That this is the kingdom spoken of by the prophet Daniel in our text, there can be no doubt, and is the same as that Dan. ii. 44, set up in the days of the kings represented by the ten toes of the fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image. The prophet sees the four great empires rising out of the sea, figured by the four beasts. Each lasted its appointed season, and then made way for its successor, the Babylonian followed by the Medo-Persian, the Medo-Persian by the Macedonian or Grecian, and that by the Roman, the most oppressive and tyrannical of all, and divided into ten kingdoms corresponding to the ten toes of the mystic image. These, at the time predestined by Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," would be driven from the face of the earth as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor; but before their removal, the kingdom spoken of by the prophet, the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ would be set up; a kingdom differing from them, alike in its distinctive character and in its duration. They were fading, existing for their allotted season to fulfil the high purposes of the Monarch of the Universe, and then vanishing away; whereas this

is to be an everlasting dominion—a dominion of blessing to a ruined world, established on the ruins of the devil's kingdom, and accomplishing all the promises and prophecies contained in the Book of God, from its beginning to the closing chapter of the Revelation.

Let us look at another passage of Scripture, which casts, I conceive, a clear light on this subject. The prophet Isaiah was commissioned to announce the birth of that Wonderful Child, whose name was Emmanuel, God with us, or in our nature, and who was destined to be the channel of unspeakable and endless mercies to the nations of the world. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.) Every word of this remarkable prophecy is pregnant with blessing, and demands man's most reverent and heedful attention. At present, we are specially concerned with one particular, "the government shall be upon his shoulder." The subjects of this government are Jews and Gentiles: Jews,—for at His birth He was announced King of the Jews, and it is here predicted that He should have the throne of his father David; and Gentiles also, for the prophet (ch. xlii. 1) expressly says, "He shall bring forth judg-

ment to the Gentiles;" and in the 4th verse, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles (*i. e.*, the distant parts of the earth) shall wait for his law." Isaiah then mentions some particulars concerning the kingdom, and among them its duration. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts," for His own glory, "will perform this." The terms of this prediction as to the eternal continuance of Christ's kingdom are definite and precise. But it may perhaps be objected, that the expression "for ever" does not invariably signify in Scripture an eternal duration, but in some instances a period of considerable length. Thus the passover and the appointment of the two silver trumpets to be used for assembling the congregation of Israel were each enjoined to be observed as "an ordinance for ever," (Ex. xii. 4; and Numb. x. 8,) that is, during the time of that dispensation. The instances, however, in which the expression is used to describe a lengthened, but not eternal, duration are but few, and are rather the exceptions to the ordinary sense in which it is employed. A comparison of this Scripture with one or two other passages

will be sufficient to convince us, that the continuance of Christ's kingdom is eternal.

The thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel records a vision, with which that prophet was favoured, acquainting him with the re-union into one nation of the scattered tribes both of Israel and Judah, of their recovery from their present state of unbelief and alienation from God, and of their becoming the faithful subjects of the true David, Jesus of Nazareth. We read, verses 25—28, "They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Now observe, in connection with this prophecy, the language of the angel announcing to the virgin that she should be the favoured mother of the long-expected Saviour: "He shall be great, and shall

be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i. 32, 33.) There was an end to the four kingdoms which Daniel saw; but Messiah's is one which shall not be destroyed. There was an end to the Jewish passover and the silver trumpets, for they decayed and waxed old with the covenant to which they belonged; but there is no end to that kingdom which is secured by an everlasting covenant—by the Word of the God of Truth. There is no end to the compassion and love of the King of the Jews towards His ancient and long scattered people, and there will be no end, therefore, to His kingdom over them. Brought back to the God of their fathers in the counsels of His unfathomable love, they shall be a standard and ensign to the Gentile world, to which *many* nations, as we learn from Isaiah and Micah, shall flock, to be instructed in the knowledge, and to walk in the ways, of God. From these prophecies compared together, as well as from others which it is needless now to specify, we come to the conclusion that He, around whose cross our deepest sympathies and holiest affections cluster—He, the God-Man, has been constituted by the sovereign will of the Father the Lord and Head both of all

creation and of a ransomed and restored world, that so the riches of His wondrous grace and the bright glories of His character may be manifested in the kingdom of Christ through everlasting ages.

It must be confessed that a difficulty—and that no inconsiderable one—has been felt in reconciling the declarations of Scripture, such as we have been considering, concerning the eternity of Christ's kingdom, with the language of the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 24: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." The Scripture, we know, cannot be broken, neither does one part of it contradict another, though the feebleness of our understandings may prevent our discerning how they harmonize. There are things connected with the attributes of Jehovah and with the Person of our adorable Redeemer, which we are unable to comprehend, and for the clear manifestation of which we must be content to wait till we shall no longer "see through a glass darkly, but face to face."

As regards the particular difficulty to which I have alluded, it must be recollected that our Lord Jesus Christ possesses, as we learn from Scripture, a peculiar kingdom, as the Son of man: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. As the Father hath life in

himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: and hath given him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of man." (John v. 22, 26, 27.) "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) But though the kingdom is His as the Son of man, we must not suppose that the Father altogether ceases to reign, for Christ and the Father *are one* in glory, in essence, in mind, in will, in operation. Nor must we think, because Christ, in a certain sense, will give up the kingdom to the Father, that therefore He will no longer reign. The kingdom may be and is the same, though the mode of administering it may vary. Its present state is one widely different from what it will be when the King is personally present with His Church. No age since His ascension into heaven has been without evidences of His royalty. The sceptre of His grace has swayed many a heart; and, could mortal man read the names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, a vast number would be discovered, "called, and chosen, and faithful," who in successive generations honoured and obeyed Him as their King. But these have been the few among the many—"a remnant according to the election of grace," and will be such till the glorious appearing of their King. "We see not yet all things put under him;" the devil still contests the empire of the world with

Him whose right it is; and yet no true servant of Christ doubts the reality of his Lord's present kingdom. We learn from the word of God that there will be another form or phase of the kingdom commencing with the second coming of Christ, and continuing during the "thousand years." (Rev. xx. 4.) Our exalted Saviour will take to Him His great power and reign triumphantly, and "destroy them which destroy the earth." The kingdom, for a lengthened period His by right, will become His in fact; and according to Daniel's prediction (ii. 44), "break in pieces and consume" the toes of the image; and instead of being feeble, as it now is, "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Then every Antichrist shall be destroyed—Popery, infidelity, and every principle and power that opposes Christ shall be put down, the devil chained, and "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

After this, at the close of the millennial period, the Book of Revelation (chap. xx. 7) informs us that Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and

will excite a vast outburst of rebellion against Christ and His saints. This will end in the casting of the arch-deceiver into the lake of fire and brimstone, the general judgment, and the final destruction of death and Hades. All will then be once and for ever subdued to the glorious God-Man; everything in the universe put under His feet; and having finally accomplished the work He had undertaken, He will resign the kingdom to the Father. That which was the peculiar work undertaken by the Son of God in our nature will be fulfilled; the world will have been recovered by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; there will be no more enemies to vanquish, no more judgment to execute, no more sinners to save; but "God will be all in all."

Nor are we to suppose that the Father will then reign without His Incarnate Son. "The river of the water of life (Rev. xxii. 1) proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," the Son of God in our nature; and as His saints are to "reign with Him, and sit down with Him on His throne," in the kingdom of His glory, so He will reign with them for ever and ever.

And now, dear brethren, let us ask, What are the PRACTICAL LESSONS to be derived from the subject which we have been considering this evening. The study of prophecy is often exclaimed

against, as if it led men off from practice to mere speculation. The best things, we know, may be abused; the doctrines of the Bible may be made mere subjects of speculation, and so may prophecy. But prophecy, rightly studied and reverently applied, will lead to practical results, and will help to prepare those who give heed to it for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. This subject sounds *a note of warning*. Compare the state, I will not say of Christendom generally, but of Christendom as exhibited by the professors of Christianity in what is called Christian England, with the habit and character of Christians in the Apostle Paul's day. He says of them, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." The very reverse is the character of the majority among us at the present day. The unseen realities of the eternal world are unheeded and forgotten; and *seen things*, the things of time and sense, the honours, the pleasures, the gains of this dying world, occupy the thoughts and engross the affections of thousands, and tens of thousands. Worldliness is specially one of the besetting sins of the present day. But worldliness is the bane of godliness. The eager desire of present things deadens the affections, and prevents their rising to higher objects. The dizzy dreams of ambition; the thirst for plea-

sure; the pursuit of science for its own sake, and not for the glory of God; the making haste to be rich;—these close the eyes to the overwhelming importance of those things which should be mainly thought of and most earnestly sought after by a dying, yet immortal, being. Brethren, *a kingdom which cannot be moved* is set before you as the legitimate object of your ambition; its treasures are the only treasures worth your seeking, because they are satisfying and enduring. With this kingdom, then, before you, set not your affection on perishing things. "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." (Luke xii. 33.)

2. We learn hence *the importance of personal godliness.* The word of God plainly tells us that he who is destined to reign with Christ hereafter has Christ, in some measure, reigning within him now. What avails it, then, to hear, to read, to speak about the Kingdom of Christ and its glories, unless we ourselves are treading the up-hill path that leads to it? If the evil of the heart remains unresisted; if covetousness, or lust, or pride, or self-righteousness are allowed to hold undisturbed sway; if the offending right hand or right eye are spared, the consequence will be exclusion from the Kingdom. The bright prospect of the Kingdom

should encourage us to engage vigorously in the Christian warfare, daily petitioning Christ, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies;" subdue by the mighty working of Thy grace this sinful disposition, that corrupt desire, that worldly affection, and bring my whole spirit, and soul, and body into captivity to Thyself.

Need I add, that personal godliness can never be severed from a faithful endeavour to discharge our relative duties? What claims does our Lord make on us as husbands, parents, masters, neighbours, as connected with our fellow-men by the ties of country, or of our common humanity! If the social condition of our poorer brethren in the close and crowded alleys of our large cities and manufacturing towns claims our sympathies, how much more ought we to feel for their spiritual wants? They want the Bible and its fire-side teacher; they want the aggressive benevolence of him who, in the spirit of his Master, will tell them of the love of Christ in shedding His precious blood to obtain their pardon. If we are pressing onward to the kingdom, we cannot be unmindful of their wants. Then, too, consider what we owe to the honour of Christ, and to the spiritual necessities of the deluded victims of Rome, the infidel and semi-infidel theories of continental Protestants, the unbelieving Jew, and the benighted Gentile.

Does the love of Christ lead us to contribute liberally, according to the means entrusted to us, to make known to them the truth as it is in Jesus? If Christians had arisen to a right perception of their duties, our various societies which are seeking to benefit them would not be restricted in their work for want of help. We cannot be pressing forward to the Kingdom ourselves without seeking to bring others into it also. "Come with us, and we will do you good." May each of you, dear brethren, give this evidence, that he is an heir of the Kingdom!

3. *Lastly, this subject abounds in encouragement to the Christian in his warfare.* He has to resist many a temptation; but his gracious Master's promise stands firm. "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I have overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Has he to struggle against many and strong corruptions, exclaiming in the bitterness of his heart, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Let him learn that the enduring of the cross and the mortification of the old man is the sure pathway to the crown. Is he in the depths of sorrow and affliction, from the various losses and visitations which are the lot of man, and especially of the saints in this life? Let him call to mind the

experience of one who thus expresses his hope: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." It is "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," compared with which present trials are but as the dust in the balance. What a glory is it to have our bodies made like to Christ's glorified body,—our whole mind and heart like the mind and heart of Christ,—every thought, desire, affection, identical with His will, —every seed of sin eradicated, every temptation and inclination to evil gone, every tear dried up; to be with Christ, to behold His glory, to live on His smile, and that for ever! Hope is the charm of life; but what hope so strong and sustaining as this: "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom?" Only, dear brethren, let me add, be very diligent in having your title to the kingdom clear. If there be a half-hearted religion—a halting, hesitating course between God and the world—a secret reluctance to confess Christ, no wonder if you are harassed with doubts and fears, and if a cloud overcasts the prospect and darkens the mind. Seek then in the use of God's appointed means to be personally assured of your union with Christ, that so yours may be a bright hope, gladdening your

heart, and diffusing itself over your whole character as an heir of glory.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever."

LECTURE X.

THE UNVEILING OF HIDDEN WONDERS IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

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JOHN I. 50, 51.

"*Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*"

THE subject before us is one of great difficulty. For in attempting to speak of the unveiling of hidden wonders in Christ's kingdom, we are necessarily led into a comparison of the relative evidences of faith and sight, and in so doing, to reason rather from analogy than from direct revelation. "The

secret things belong unto the Lord, but the things revealed unto us."

In attempting, therefore, to illustrate these hidden wonders, one of two courses is opened to me. The first, to reason from the experience of religion, and pursue step by step the growth of grace in the soul, tracing out its development in the future state. This would lead us into a very close examination of the mysteries of the kingdom which are revealed by the Holy Ghost to the infant Church here below,—a survey of those pledges and foretastes of the coming glory which far exceed all the sensations or conceptions of man in his present state, and which would involve a comparison between heaven begun below and heaven perfected above. By such a course we might profitably contemplate those deep things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit; we might infer what are the capacities of the soul now, and what they will be when it is released from its burden of flesh and infirmity: we might even describe the possible expansion of power and enjoyment of a condition of soul and body in every way perfect, but we can state nothing positive as regards the actual condition of the saints in Christ's kingdom, nor of the wonders which will then be unveiled.

Our investigation would terminate in a comparative view of the moral powers and employments of the redeemed in eternity.

The second course is to examine those direct statements of Scripture in which a transition from faith to sight, from earthly to heavenly, is clearly expressed. By this means we shall be brought into the legitimate range of prophecy, which in its early stages is a matter of faith, but in its accomplishment a matter of sight and sense, and which in its successive steps of progress presents us with sure land-marks or starting points from which our enquiry may be carried to some definite result. And that this is a lawful mode of arriving at truth, so far as God is pleased to make it known to us, may be gathered from the promises made to the Church both in the Old and New Testaments. If, for example, the prophet Jeremiah is invited: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things (or hidden things) which thou knowest not." (Jerem. xxxiii. 3.) Our blessed Lord encourages his disciples by the promise, that "when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide them into all truth, and shew them things to come." Thus in our text, when Nathaniel believed in Christ, he received a promise of future and fuller visible manifestation: "Thou shalt see greater things than these."

Nathaniel, in the seclusion of private devotion, had retired from the observation of man; he had perhaps poured out his sincere prayer to the Invisible, and sought communion with him. Whatever may have been the subject of his thoughts at the time, it is plain that when Jesus told him he had seen him under the fig tree and knew him, some secret spring was touched, some well-understood conviction was produced, which told of supernatural sympathy of divine omniscience, and he at once confessed Jesus to be his prophet, priest and king: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." The eye of heaven had penetrated his concealment, and he believes. Jesus tells him the time is coming when the veil which conceals heaven from his view would be removed, and he would see the spiritual world, the glory of Messiah, and the hidden wonders of the kingdom. This is the ground we wish to take. It was not enough for Nathaniel to believe that the spiritual world pervades and penetrates the natural. Jesus assures him that he should see greater things when the spiritual would be unveiled, and God would bring to light the hidden things of darkness; when faith would be succeeded by sight, and hope by fruition for ever. And this explains the real distinction between the two dispensations of grace and of glory, removing out of the way one of the great

stumbling-blocks which has hindered many in their study of prophecy. For while we entirely deprecate the doctrine of development as put forth by our modern school of divines, we hold the absolute necessity of a transition from one dispensation to another if the Scriptures are to be fulfilled. And thus as the Mosaic dispensation was a state of infancy compared with the dispensation of the Gospel, yet both were glorious. "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory; for even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect by reason of the glory that excelleth." So we would assert that the present dispensation is a state of imperfection as regards things to be revealed, because it is surrounded with mysteries and parables which await their exposition when the invisible will be visible, and the intangible tangible. And thus St. Paul says in 1 Cor. xiii. 12: "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." No one will dispute that it was a special favour granted to Simeon and Anna that they did not see death until they had seen the Lord's Christ. It was a step in advance of their age, a link between the close of one dispensation and the commencement of another. How much greater will

be the privilege when they who are waiting for their coming Lord "shall behold the King in his beauty," and see the angels "ascending and descending upon the Son of man." The solemn and interesting subject which we have to consider is the transition from mystery to manifestation:—from the Church mystical, to the manifestation of the sons of God at the coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In attempting to sketch out some of the hidden wonders which will then be unveiled, I might enter upon a very wide field of scriptural investigation, but as my object will be rather to edify than to raise points of enquiry, I shall confine myself to the following classification of the discoveries which will be made to us concerning,

I. The spiritual world.

II. The resurrection state.

III. The redemption and restitution of the material and spiritual creation.

IV. The judgment which will fix for ever the boundaries of heaven and hell.

I. The discoveries which will be made concerning the spiritual world. By the spiritual world I do not mean the communion of the spirits of just men made perfect with the innumerable company of angels, (Heb. xii. 23,) for this belongs to the intermediate state, but the eternal condition and

communion of men and angels in the day of Christ, when we shall see "the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

And here we may observe, that many dark and difficult subjects are inseparably connected with the angelic agency; as, for example, the entrance of sin into heaven, and its introduction into our world by a rebellious angel; the ministration of elect angels to those who shall be heirs of salvation; the temptations and wiles of the devil, transforming himself into an angel of light; the joy of angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. In one word, the antagonism between good and evil spirits, and which will end in the victory of one over the other in the kingdom of Christ. This strife is going on, and we see nothing of it. We know only by spiritual teaching the communion of angels, and angels know only by spiritual communion the sympathy of humanity; but angels and men have a common, though not the same, interest in Christ, who in his day will gather together in one all things in himself; things in heaven and things in earth.

Up to the present moment, angels desire to look into mysteries yet unrevealed to them, and catch but glimpses of the manifold wisdom of God by its reflection in the church below. They are waiting for their own fulness and confirmation in holi-

ness for ever, when their warfare with Satan will cease, and the old serpent be cast into the bottomless pit. And we too here on earth are longing to know more of these things. We know that angels take charge of us, keep us in our ways, encamp around us, seal in their foreheads the mourners in Zion, and wait to carry the disembodied spirit to the bosom of our heavenly Father: but our eyes are holden; we cannot see the mountain filled with the hosts of the Lord; we cannot see "Satan as lightning fall from heaven;" we cannot certainly divine who Michael the archangel is, what are the orders of principalities and powers in the heavenly places; we cannot conceive of the cherubim, or of the seraphim, or of the mighty ones who, in the day of power, will gather out of the kingdom all things that offend; how they will collect together the elect from the four corners of the earth; how they will attend in ranks of thousands, and tens of thousands, and of thousands of thousands upon the coming King of glory; how they will welcome the redeemed of the first resurrection into the heavenly city, and how finally they will join with the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders around the throne in saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

All these mysteries will be cleared up at the coming of Christ. We shall see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man. He who was made lower than the angels will be the head of angels, and be their object of worship for ever. The redeemed who sit on Christ's throne will judge angels, and the spiritual world will be disclosed to the observation of the spiritual body. Then it will be known how sin entered heaven; how Satan fell; why Satan tempted, and what Satan suffers. Who can tell the glory of that spectacle? If the sight of one, "whose countenance was like lightning, and whose raiment was white as snow," made the Roman keepers and their bold centurion shake through fear, and become as dead men; if another appearing in a vision to the Apostle John, caused him such awe and astonishment that he would fain pay him worship as divine; what will be the effect of that opening of the heavens, when myriads of such holy angels, when all the holy angels, not one wanting, shall burst upon our perfected vision; when the children of the resurrection will be like the angels, will be pure as angels, strong as angels, obedient as angels, and will worship in the beauty of holiness, serve God day and night in his temple, die no more, sin no more, be filled with all the fulness of God.

But, II., the discoveries which will be made con-

cerning the resurrection body. To see angels in their bright and dazzling raiment has been granted on few occasions to men; but to see them ascending and descending on the Son of man, is reserved for the resurrection state.

In that day Christ will send forth his angels, who will reap the harvest of the earth. This is the gathering of the elect (Jas. i. 18, Rev. xiv. 4), the wave-offering of the first-fruits, when the church will be presented as a chaste bride to her husband; a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Then, and not till then, will a perfect visible church be placed before the sight of an astonished world. This will be the glorious liberty of the children of God. They are Christ's hidden ones now: the world knows them not, because it knew him not.

I do not dwell upon the order or manner of the resurrection. The opening of the graves, the collecting and re-uniting of the scattered dust, the surrendering of the hidden treasures of the deep, the sudden change from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal, from a natural to a spiritual body. We know not what we shall be. The manner in which this wonderful process will be accomplished is far beyond our conception. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; we shall see

him as he is. Our vile body will be fashioned like unto his glorious body." But we may and can imagine the great array of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, the noble army of martyrs, the saints of every clime, and tongue, and people, and grade of society. The great multitude which no man can number, and the strange and glorious discoveries which will be made when the heavens are opened and we see the glory of God in renewed and glorified bodies. For this we have Scripture warrant. We know that there must be individual identity when the Book of Life is opened; that there will be a recognition of the saints when we sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, when the eye of Job will see and not another, when Moses and Elias will be known, and when we ourselves shall be known; when we shall see those we loved on earth and whom we expect to see again, when we shall see some whom we do not perhaps expect to see, and when, too, we shall see some of whom we have scarce ventured to entertain the hope we should see. This, however, will create neither surprise nor disappointment. The mystery is finished. We shall see by the light of the Lamb: all will be plain. Our intellect will be infinitely expanded: we shall have the intuitive consciousness, the eternal apprehension of perfect purity. We shall see God, and

therefore all God's works. Memory will be infinitely strengthened, so that not a scrap of the past, not a link in the long series of earthly association will be missing. The day of life with every motive, every act, every word, and every event will be recollected at a glance; and although the pages of our diary be blotted over and glued together by long oblivion, every leaf will be opened and every word be read as in a sunbeam. Then when soul and body are so adapted as that each is to each as a chariot of everlasting light and love, who can tell the wonders which will be traversed with the rapidity of lightning. Then the mystery of grace and of providence will be solved; mercies, judgments and afflictions, persecutions and crosses, joys and triumphs, will blend their varied colours, and shew forth the goodness of our God. All things have worked together for good, according to his purpose. Then each redeemed and glorified saint will tell his own story; and as all will be an exposition of the past, so the interests and influences of our individual existence here on earth will be connected with our happiness in eternity. Then the minister will know for certain the seals of his ministry; and this not collectively but individually. Each one that has been blessed under his pastoral care will be brought before him in that day, for he shall present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Then will he receive the crown he is to wear, and recognize the preciousness, the name, the worth of each jewel in it. Then will he reap with joy what was sown in tears, and wear with praise what was won with prayer. Then, too, the saints will know their teachers, not as they have known them—undervalued perhaps on the one hand, or idolized on the other,—but in their true character. As each star has its appropriate dimensions and brilliancy in the firmament, so will they who turn many to righteousness shine in their different degrees of honour, for one star differeth from another star in glory. And this is now a hidden wonder to many. Then, too, weeping Rachel will know the resurrection glory of her infants; baptized or unbaptized, their happy forms unscathed by the chilling atmosphere and rugged discipline of a hard world will retain their identity and come again to their own border, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Then the widow and the widower will rejoice in the brief separation which has made their meeting so blessed. They will then know the causes of their desolation, and reap the fruits of it. The doubts of the feeble and fainting will be cleared away as a morning mist, the gloomy forebodings of the tempted and persecuted be dispelled, the deep things of God will be seen in the sea of glass; all the relations of cause

and effect, all our mutual helps and hindrances, all the mysteries of sorrow, and all the mysteries of joy, will be expounded by the voice of infallibility. Then, too, will the meaning of prophecy be explained, many things difficult and hard to be understood: all the schools of the prophets will adopt one system of interpretation. The two witnesses, and the eighth head of the beast, and the seven seals, and seven trumpets, and seven vials, will be but as the heading of chapters which are repeated by heart. Then Babylon and Jerusalem will have their respective stations for eternity; and England, Scotland, Russia, Rome, and Geneva, will know who has the pre-eminence. Such are some of the wonders which will be brought to light in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory. The resurrection soul, attempered to the resurrection body, will understand all mysteries and expatiate in the unbounded realms of light and love.

III. The discoveries which will be made concerning the redemption and the restitution of the material and spiritual creation.

No one will deny that there is a mysterious sympathy between the natural and spiritual creation—a sympathy in felt sorrow and anticipated joy, of present bondage and future deliverance; and that this participation of distress and of hope

is intimately and inseparably connected with the fall of man. This is distinctly expressed by St. Paul, Rom. viii. 22, 23: "For *we know* that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: and not only they but ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body." If then this be so, the deliverance of creation will follow man's redemption in the day of Christ's appearing. As the bondage of the world was consequent upon the sin of man, the liberty of the world will follow man's restoration. This at once explodes the idea that there will be an entire destruction of the material universe. It would involve an imperfection in the idea of redemption if it were conceded that creation had been so irrecoverably marred, that it could only be destroyed not renewed. But if, as we have seen, the resurrection state promises to our longing hopes a complete regeneration of body and soul, accompanied by a real identity of person with all its earthly associations, so the coming of our Lord assures us that there will be a new heavens and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness, and that as in the garden of Eden it was possible for God to walk with man in the cool of the day, and for man without sin to enjoy the as yet unmarred productions

of God's hand, so in the coming day there will be an adaptation of the earthly to the heavenly; the vision of Jacob will meet with its full accomplishment; there will be a bond between earth and heaven; we shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Then the promises to the Churches which are consequent upon the return of Jesus will be fulfilled. The redeemed will eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, and drink of the water of the river of life: they will eat the hidden manna, and read the new name upon the stone: they will see the face of God, and have the name of the city—the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God, written upon them. It is no speculation to affirm that the new heavens and the new earth are two localities which will be peopled by their appropriate inhabitants. Hence it is, that in the restitution of all things, that which is now out of course, disjointed, and driving heavily like overtasked machinery, will be harmonized and remodelled. That world, upon which a Saviour suffered, and which harmonized with his sufferings, will be renewed for a Saviour's triumph and will harmonize with his glory; or, in the language of Chrysostom, "like some foster nurse, it will share in the glory of the royal child whom it

has reared, and who, at length, ascending the throne of his kingdom is mindful of her in whose lap, in time past, he has been nurtured." This great enigma, then, will be worked out. The redeemed will realize their individual salvation; and oh! who can tell what it will be to have passed the waves of sin, temptation, and infirmity, and to look back upon Egypt with all its contaminating influences, they will stand not in the wildernesses of Sinai, amidst the barren rocks and tangled thorns, but in the Land of Promise, where all around shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, and all the air is balm; where "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." I dare not say how these things can be; it is now a hidden wonder; but the wind bloweth where it listeth, and when the clouds which brood upon the deep shall be chased away, we shall see the new heaven and the new earth as the first heaven and the first earth pass away and there is no more sea. And God will make all things new; and the tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God him-

self shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. And if this bond between heaven and earth be established, is it impossible to conceive of stages or periods in the millennial kingdom? Is it altogether a paradox to speak of our heavenly King coming to his throne in Sion, of the coexistence of a heavenly and an earthly Jerusalem, of the Apostles sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. If men walk in the light of heaven now, is it unscriptural to say that the nations of the saved shall then walk in the light of the New Jerusalem above, shining brighter than the sun and stars around them; and that the saints who reign as kings on the earth will bring their glory to the New Jerusalem above. They will cast their crowns before Christ, and walk in the light and enjoyment of God and of the Lamb. These and many other promises which bring into immediate alliance the material and the spiritual shew that we are indeed to see greater things, of which an outline is given in the promise of my text.

IV. The discoveries which will be made concerning that judgment which will fix for eternity the boundaries of heaven and hell.

Whatever difficulty may attend the enquiry as to the abode and condition of the spirits of the unbelieving in the intermediate state, there is none in the general apprehension of their ultimate destiny. There may be a fearful consciousness and looking for of judgment, but not judgment as yet. However terrible the sum of a sinner's guilt may be at the day of his death, the effects of his sin are not yet seen, and consequently those remainders of iniquity which he has sown in the earth, and which have been propagating from generation to generation, must grow until the harvest. They are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, when the cup of guilt will be full, and when sin, with all its consequences, will be visited upon the transgressor.

One of the earliest prophets said, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." There will be a judgment upon Antichrist in the first resurrection, but the consummation of judgment will be in the general resurrection at the last day. It is not my purpose to assign the times and seasons of the events as they will occur; the subject is one of such terrible im-

port, that one is lost in the contemplation of the bringing to light the hidden works of darkness. There will be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of damnation. (John v. 28, 29.) "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. xii. 2.) They who have been ashamed of Christ, of them shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. And when the great white throne is set, and the dead, small and great, stand before God, who can paint the terrors of the scene?

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory; then will he separate one from another. As the blessed will inherit the kingdom in glorious bodies, the cursed will depart into everlasting fire with sensual and devilish bodies. As Dives saw Lazarus in the parable, so the lost will behold the saved in the reality: the poor and afflicted will put off a body of sores and corruption, and be clothed with a glorious body. The proud and sensual, who are clothed with purple and fine linen in all the comeliness of pampered humanity, will be clad in the hideous body of anguish, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Oh! what

strange transitions. The loathsome soul which once inhabited a beautiful form, wearing the external mask of attractive loveliness, will now be clothed with a loathsome body; the same soul and the same body will be united in their deformity, and their one employment will be to minister to each other's misery. All will be in keeping; they will call in vain to the mountains and hills to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. But no recesses of earth or hell will hide them from the searchings of an infuriated conscience. The liar, the hypocrite, the blasphemer, the adulterer, the murderer, the drunkard, the false professor, the idolater, the deluded Pharisee, the unregenerate and unconverted worshipper of the beast, shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. What! shall the wonders of hell be unveiled? shall the saints behold and know the depths of Satan's sin, and the depths of his sufferings? shall they indeed see the end of the wicked—that he shall perish for ever? Oh! mystery of mysteries which must yet be unveiled. "They shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither

shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." (Isa. lxvi. 24.) Oh! is it possible to imagine the confusion and remorse of thousands; the wrenching asunder of social bonds; the love of parents, children, brethren, sisters, turned into the hatred of devils; and all this so illustrated as that God will be justified, and every mouth stopped; and both saved and lost will magnify the infinite attributes of an eternally holy God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Yea, more deep and incomprehensible as it is to our present feelings, "the righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance. He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked; so that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth." (Psalm lviii. 10, 11.) "The righteous shall have dominion over them in the morning." (Psalm xlix. 14.)

And now, in making some practical application of these things, we may observe,

1. The influence which a lively faith in unseen things has upon the people of God.

It is thought by some that meditations like these have an unsettling tendency, because too exciting,—that they interrupt rather than confirm the steady and practical flow of religion in the soul. But this is not the inference we should draw from our Lord's reply to Nathaniel. "Thou

shalt see greater things than these" was the quickening motive presented to the early faith of the enquiring Israelite.

And when we examine the addresses of the apostles, whether in their epistles or in their sermons, we invariably find that the motives which they employ to stimulate to a diligent, persevering, and holy walk are drawn from the unseen future. And it is in this way that St. Paul, in Heb. xi., defines and illustrates the walk of faith. He tells us faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; or in other words, faith assures us of their reality and worth, as if they were before our eyes and in our actual possession. When therefore he speaks of Abel and of Enoch, he shews the unseen substance to which the sacrifice of the first martyr and the holy walk of the first prophet had respect. He speaks of Noah's fear of things not seen; of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob looking for a city which hath foundations, and desiring a better country, that is, an heavenly; of the offering up of Isaac and of the burial of Joseph, as proofs that they believed in a resurrection state; and of Moses seeing him that is invisible, and having respect unto the recompense of the reward. And the more closely we can bring the spiritual to the mortal,—the more constantly we can realize the very thin partition which separates the one

from the other,—the more we shall be quickened in our Christian course. "You shall see greater things than these" has led the hardy traveller through regions in which the boundaries of sea and land are veiled by an impenetrable mask of ice. This great principle has animated the antiquarian in his laborious researches in the royal tombs of Memphis, the palaces of Nineveh, and the granite inscriptions of Sinai. This search for the hidden treasure, this joy in the expectation of its discovery, fills every avenue of active and persevering effort. How much more when the promise is given that the heavens shall be opened, and we shall see all the glories of the heavenly and eternal state grouped around the person of our glorious and most precious Redeemer, "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. i. 8.) "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

The power of this great motive must be in the experience of all who know the love of Christ, and who look for his appearing.

When Satan, with his flattering invitations, en-

tices the fancy by presenting the glory of this present world, one ray from the opening heavens will cast the most splendid temptation into the shade, and stain all the pride of it with everlasting disgrace. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

When, too, the lust of the flesh winds its coil around the heart, and by some attraction of earthly beauty exerts the charm of sensual fascination, then the thought of heavenly purity, of angelic comeliness, of the unspotted beauty of the Lamb, of the glory of his saints, their fulness of pleasure at his right hand, will in a moment break the spell, and will make the tempter an object, not of desire, but of disgust.

And when the hour of persecution or reproach for Christ's sake comes upon us, when the rage of Satan and the malice of a perverse generation threaten and alarm, then those terrible consequences, always increased by the fears and misgivings of the carnal fancy, such as disgrace, or loss of property, or bodily sufferings, or banishment, or death itself, are removed by a glimpse within the veil. It was under persecution that Stephen cried, saying, "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And thousands since his day have been supported under the sorest trials

by the prospect of the coming glory. When urged to renounce their religion, they have told their persecutors that life was not sweet to them if they might not live Christians, nor death bitter if they might die for Christ; they accepted not deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. This is the grand sustaining motive amid the depressing anxieties of affliction, or the sufferings of lingering disease, when the outward man perishes, and the inward man is renewed day by day. Then that abstruse calculation, only learned in the school of such experience, is as the simplest rule of arithmetic: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." And again: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." And if this be the influence of an unseen future upon the people of God, what ought it to be to the careless and carnal?

Are the worldly altogether insensible to the influence of sound reason? are they utterly deaf to the voice of conscience? They will take up our Bibles, and ask for fuller evidence; they will

criticize our doctrine, and claim for themselves the freedom of the will to choose, and the inherent power of the moral man to do what is right. But can they deny a future state of reward and punishment? can they deny the short changing transitory nature of all visible things, and the eternal and unchangeable nature of the unseen future? Is it in vain we appeal to the sensual, and warn him that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, when men cry peace and safety; that Jesus will be the Judge of quick and dead; that the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed; that the books will be opened, and all will be judged according to their works? They have witnessed God's judgments in the earth; they have heard of God's threatening; they have seen how Sodom and Babylon and Jerusalem have been destroyed, and they have heard how sinners will be "cast into outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,"—will neither past nor future affect them?

Common indeed are the expressions in the mouth of the men of this world, that it is a treacherous, cold, mortifying world; under the impulse of disappointed hopes or decaying vigour, they will cry with Solomon, "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity and vexation of spirit;" but there is no hope in the future, no lesson from the past. And if they

are brought to this confession here, where they compare their desires with the things that are seen, how will they view them when, in the opening eternity, they see them withering in their grasp; all their schemes of ambition, their fancied treasures of wisdom and wealth, and righteousness perishing before their eyes, and their uplifted hand knocking at the door only to elicit the eternal answer, "Depart ye cursed."

"What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." Oh! for grace to clear away these mists of ignorance, that we may put a right value on things seen and on things unseen. Oh! that our eye were fixed on the cross of Jesus, that, as in a glass, we might look beyond to the glory of Jesus.

May the Lord give us grace to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

LECTURE XI.

THE VASTNESS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY THE REV. W. HARRISON, M.A.,
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ISAIAH IX. 7.

"*Of the increase of his government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.*"

HEBREWS II. 8.

"*Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.*"

BY these magnificent thoughts the Spirit of God has described the vastness of the kingdom of Christ; for though in themselves they are intended to limit that kingdom to the world in which we

well and the people whom He has chosen, they do it really may much more. The context of [illegible] furnishes us with the sublimest conceptions of the authority, person, and glory of Him who is herein described as a man. The former speaks of Him as carrying a name which is above every name: "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." The latter represents Him as the Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. And yet both these descriptions terminate in one and the same point, namely, the peculiar, and in one sense restricted, connection of this glorious King with this world.

Need I say that this subject is one of overwhelming magnificence, and that it demands more than a human pen to unfold its glory? I approach it with trembling. Let my hearers pray that my ignorance may not shut out the light from their eyes, but that as the darker the night, the brighter shine the stars in the unclouded sky, so God may cause his own truths to burn the more brilliantly through the obscurity of my feeble thoughts.

It is quite clear, from a careful consideration of the twofold nature of Christ, that his authority as well as his person must have a twofold bearing. On the one hand, as the Word of God, his sove-

reignty must extend itself over all things that he has made, for "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." On the other hand, as the Word became flesh,—the Word of life, whom human eyes have contemplated and human hands have handled,—his authority seems specially, and as a sort of peculiar, attached to the empire of man, into brotherhood with whom He has entered.

In speaking, therefore, of the vastness of the kingdom of Christ, and looking at the texts which have been selected to express it, it is my duty to confine myself exclusively to the latter. The object of these Lectures indeed seems to belong only to the millennial reign of Christ and the peculiar empire connected therewith. Thus a considerable portion of the subject is removed: and yet how vast a topic remains! To do justice even to that kingdom which belongs to Jesus as Son of man, what elevation of thought, what spiritual conceptions, what sense of holiness is needful! May the fire which touched Isaiah's lips when he was about to describe what he saw of the divine glory in the temple sanctify my thoughts while I attempt to shew the glory of that kingdom which will be personally administered by a Divine Man.

The combined aspect under which these passages of Scripture represent our subject is threefold.

Thus we have

I. The comprehensiveness of the kingdom of Christ.

II. Its power of expansion.

III. The capacity in which it will be administered.

I. That the Son of God was to hold a peculiar relationship towards this world is a truth manifested not only by positive and inferential statements of Scripture, but by the very fact of his incarnation; and that this relationship could not cease when his body was glorified is no less plain. The whole argument of Scripture (if we take the Bible as a whole), goes to affirm that the divine method of recovering and restoring fallen man, in contradistinction to the fallen angels, was by the stupendous conception of the incarnation. By this act God for ever identified his Son, and through Him himself with his creature, insomuch that in making the former a little lower than the angels, He raised the latter in their Head to a height and dignity infinitely above them. Until this event, angels were placed in authority over this world, or at least over some of its dispensations. Such is the apostle's argument in Hebrews ii. But now, he says, "unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." But what? "Thou madest *man* a

little lower than the angels,—and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. But now we see not yet all things put under him." Here seems a difficulty. Man has not that dominion. No; but he will have it. But how? Not as a race, but in his King; and thus the Apostle unfolds the difficulty. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." The reasoning is now perfect. God promised dominion to man; but man fell and forfeited it. Yet as God's purposes shall stand, and his gifts are without repentance, He carried his promise into execution by sending Jesus to be the brother and head of his recovered inheritance, and in Him to make good the forfeited right; for what is held by the sovereign is held by the people. We say indifferently that a land belongs to such a king or such a people, for they are both one; and as the people rules through its sovereign, so man, the race, shall have all things in subjection under him in man, the Saviour and King.

Yet is there more intended than this, for the kingdom of Jesus extends over his own people; and while they rule over other things in Him, He rules over them in sanctifying energy and authority. We must lay aside, therefore, the conside-

ration of man's share in the Saviour's kingdom, and contemplate only the dominion and royalty of the Saviour himself. And here, restricted though it be to this world and to the millennial kingdom of the Redeemer, how vast is the prospect. Truly may our subject be entitled, The Vastness of Christ's Kingdom. Contemplate it morally, intellectually, spiritually, physically, what a boundless region is opened before us. We come to our text as a narrow gorge in some mountain's side. We pass into it, and by the time we have got through it, there lies before us a scene the limits of which the eye vainly endeavours to scan. Yet there are features to be discerned upon what is spread out before us, and these we must endeavour to trace upon the chart of prophecy.

1. We see then first of all Christ's government over his people. Whether they be the risen saints, coadjutors and assessors with Him in his throne, or whether they be the restored polity of Israel and the nations of the Gentiles, who are to walk in the light of the risen Church, it matters not; all are included. Over these, severally and individually, He is to reign. He is to come to be King of kings; He is to reign on the throne of David: "All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." You have already heard that there is to be order and unity as well as liberty

in this kingdom. You may learn from hence how comprehensive it will be in regard to its subjects. What is there that will be exempt from his authority? We see not yet all things put under even Him. But then it will not merely be the subjection of the external world. Christ's physical control of his kingdom is, to a certain extent, already his. Nothing can escape his power in the destinies of men. But then his empire will be morally, intellectually, and spiritually secured. Oh! what a grand thought is here. "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." He shall be one Lord in all things.

The earth shall be *morally* subjected to Him. We have the promise of a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. And does not the grand predictive Psalm lxxii. tell us, "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness. In his days shall the righteous flourish?" Yea, truly, "violence shall no more be heard in his land, wasting nor destruction within his borders." And as this is spoken of Israel proper, so shall this likewise be true of all his empire. "Thy people also shall be all righteous." Conceive, if indeed you can, such a state of things as this when the sway of the Prince of Peace shall be felt over the whole earth,

when men shall dwell together in brotherly love, when they shall sow to themselves in righteousness and reap in mercy, when all the affairs and intercourse of life shall be conducted upon strict Gospel principles. If we look abroad on the earth, even in its most favoured spots, it is with a troubled eye and half-averted gaze. The sceptre of Jesus Christ is not supreme: all things are not yet put in subjection under Him. But then it will be a new kingdom, and men shall obey because they will be morally governed.

In like manner we may say that Christ's people will be *intellectually* subject to him. In other words, the powerful and then unclouded intellects of men will be sanctified. It is indeed the first and great commandment, that we should love the Lord our God with all our *mind*; but it is not obeyed yet. The most powerful intellects are oftener led to disavow the control of the Gospel than to submit to it. It is not many *wise* men after the flesh who are called. Will the enquiries of mind then be repressed? Will men be forbidden to dive into the profundities of truth natural or spiritual, or to analyze its elements? No such thing. Grand will be the capacity of man in this state. But he will have another knowledge added to this: he will know his God, and in knowing Him all other knowledge will proceed, not at a slower pace, but

in a right direction. Men will then reason from God and to God. Christ himself will form the blessed conclusion of each experiment and induction. Every accession of knowledge will be a fresh motive for praise, a fresh call to adoring admiration of Him who is made unto us wisdom.

Further yet, the government of Christ will be *spiritually* recognized. Not only conduct, not only intellect, will submit themselves to his rule, but the *affections* will own the secret and all-pervading influence of his blessed control. Ah! then there will be nothing out of place, whether in the head or the heart. Obedience, light, love, —these will be the characteristics of the world to come, whereof we speak. You who have had experience of the power of grace in your hearts,— you know well that there is a wide difference between mere natural and spiritual affections. You know that however sweet natural affections may be, there is a something in natural affections spiritualized and sanctified, which stamps them as a distinct order of things. All the relations of life wear a different aspect when brought under spiritual control: they are not less ardent, but they are more heavenly; not less intense, but more harmonious. It is as when some beautiful instrument of music is handled by an ordinary player: the music which he performs is sweet and delightful;

we enjoy its notes in their degree: but when a master hand touches the same instrument and executes the very same composition, it is a new thing. There is a new life, a new expression given to the performance, and the very instrument seems another from the way in which its chords are struck. Thus will it be in regard to the affections of men in this new and coming kingdom.

2. Another feature in the comprehensive character of the Redeemer's kingdom will be the government of angels. For although they cannot, strictly speaking, be reckoned a part of the earthly empire of Christ, we must not overlook their peculiar connection with the history, triumphs, temptations, and glory of the Saviour, together with their promised attendance at his coming, and their offices with reference to all believers. It is evident that whatever the separate polity of these heavenly beings may be, they have had much in common with God's people. We know not what their occupation was prior to the fall of man, nor what their conceptions were of Him who, though better understood, could not be found out even by them: but we do know that as soon as man fell, their offices were engaged on his behalf, to serve or punish, to save or destroy. Moreover, when the Son of God delivered the law from Sinai, they were the mediators, and by their disposition it was

given; and when the same Son came into the world they all worshipped Him. From that hour to the present, they have been ceaselessly occupied in conducting the affairs of the world under the command of the ascended Jesus, and when He shall come back in his glory the holy angels will attend Him. It is clear, therefore, that angels are to be numbered among the subjects of the millennial empire. Indeed, have we not the assurance that they will be united with the saints under one and the same government? For St. Paul tells the Ephesians (i. 10,) that it is the divine purpose of God himself, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." It was a conjecture of some of old that the ranks of the angels, diminished as they were by the fall of Satan and his followers, were to be recruited by the Church, and that this was to be the issue of man's restoration. But there is no need to draw thus upon fancy to account for the wonderful design of God. But should the admission of angels into the millennial kingdom of the Saviour be objected to on the ground that thus there is no distinction preserved between the universal and the mediatorial empire, it may be observed, that the higher orders of the heavenly hierarchy may

not be included herein, though such an idea is scarcely reconcileable with the statement of Philippians ii. 10; or that, if included, we are to regard this kingdom as after all but a dispensation which is to be merged at the end in the universal empire of the one God. But it becomes us not to dogmatize upon such a point as this.

3. I pass on to a third feature in this kingdom, —the extension of the authority of Christ over his enemies. This is supposable on the grounds of mere equity. But it is implied in many parts of Scripture. Take first of all the expression in the second text: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." Words like these, though suitable to ancient eastern sovereignty, are scarcely applicable to the tender relations which subsist between Christ and his Church. They would rather imply the subjugation of enemies. And such we find will be the case. There are two passages which will serve as examples, the one from Psalm xviii., the other from the parable of the talents as related in Luke xix. In the former it is stated: "The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places." Now it is clear, from what we read in Rev. xx., that all the inhabitants of this earth will not be sincerely submissive to the empire of the Son of man, inasmuch as at the conclusion of the thousand years a vast portion of

them, in spite of all the evidences of divine power and goodness, will rise and make war against the camp of the saints. This passage therefore is indicative of the state of mind which will exist in those who are appropriately called "*strangers.*" But in the parable related in St. Luke we find that the open enemies of Christ will be brought under the power of the iron sceptre, and will be slain before Him at his coming. Among these foes are to be classed men and devils. The former will consist of all those who have rejected the Gospel eitherly openly or indirectly, and those who have worshipped the beast or his image. These wretched beings cast out from their fellow men, cast out even from those who have not received the Gospel, because they had not heard it, will be an abhorring unto all flesh. These were the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose God was their belly and whose glory was their shame. These were the unprofitable servants who had talents, but did not use them to the glory of God.

But devils also are included here. These detestable spirits have long had their forebodings. They preached Christ even when men rejected Him, for they confessed his authority and empire. We may well believe that it was no willing homage which they thus paid to the Son of God. What a solemn view, therefore, is thus given us of the power of

Christ. What is it? It is the power of truth, holiness, and of goodness. Before these, every form of sin and sinners will of necessity submit itself. If men wish to subjugate the bad and lawless, they are obliged to use *physical* restraint. But with Christ it is sufficient to speak or even to be present.

> "Disease and anguish fled his blest control,
> And howling fiends released the tortured soul."

Or, if on a subject like this I may invoke the language of fiction—language, however, applicable to this thought because true,—

> "So spake the cherub; and his grave rebuke,
> Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
> Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,
> And felt how awful goodness is; and saw
> Virtue, in her shape how lovely; saw—and pined
> His loss."

Yes; thus will the enemies of Christ feel, when they behold Him with all his saints. Lips which hitherto scorned or disavowed Him shall in terror proclaim his name and power, and men and devils alike shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

4. Turn we now from the intelligent part of creation to that which is inanimate and irrational, for hither also the sovereignty of Jesus reaches. The kingdom of the Son of man will extend to the intimate secrets of nature. And does not nature herself afford the illustration? There are two

worlds in one. There is the world of greatness and the world of minuteness. In both these the power of the Creator is equally displayed. It requires as much power to arrange the down on a moth's wing, or to supply the lungs of an animalcule, as it did to form the seven stars and Orion. But the exquisite care that is exercised in the secrets which science reveals to our search is no slight proof of the comprehensiveness of that kingdom in and under which they will be governed. The earth will be *physically* subject to Christ. It will be said that it is so even now: but though this be true, it is not true that He has yet exercised his authority upon it. The curse still remains upon the ground unrepealed: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." The very creatures, moreover, are yet unsubdued, or at least have not been brought under the fulfilment of the covenant which was renewed to Noah (Gen. ix. 2). "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea." But when Christ comes to reign, we shall see the recovery and resumption of the original charter of man's dominion. Let us pause for a moment to contemplate the change.

It is no fanciful idea that the millennium is to be the Sabbath of the earth, and that the original

condition of Paradise is to be repeated over the whole world. As the earth has for 6000 years exhibited a state of deterioration, misery, and ruin, so for the Sabbatical seventh thousand it will be seen under that aspect in which its Creator originally made it. Of this grand and delightful idea we have intimations in the word of God neither infrequent nor obscure.

Let us take first of all inanimate nature. There are three orders of predictions referrible to this point. The first consists of those passages in which the inanimate earth is apostrophized and called upon to rejoice at the prospects of the Saviour's reign. Such are the well-known words of the xcvi. and xcviii. Psalms: "Let the field be joyful and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh:" "Let the floods clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth." The second consists of those prophetic declarations concerning the fruitfulness of the earth. To this probably refers that expression in Psalm lxxii. 16: "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." So also let us add the declaration of Isaiah (xxxv. 1, 2), "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and

blossom as the rose: it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." And this (lv., 13): "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree." It may be considered that these passages are capable of a spiritual signification, which I do not deny, but as we are speaking of probabilities, when we take together the various predictions in which this imagery is used, it does seem as if the literal application of it could not be forbidden.

There is one more class of statements upon this point which, though consisting only of a solitary declaration, yet as coming from the pen of St. Paul, and being for the most part admitted to bear upon the restoration of this earth, is in itself of great value. I allude of course to Romans viii. 19—22. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption."

Not to expatiate over such a flowery field of thought, I would only remark that these intimations serve to assure us that the power of Christ will be exercised even upon inanimate nature during his blessed reign upon this earth. "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even *our own*

[illegible] shall bless us." The curse will be reversed. Thistles and weeds will be taken away. "The ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed." Oh! blessed happy time, oh! that thou wouldst speedily to this sorrowful world. Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? Why is thy chariot so long in coming? Come, Lord Jesus.

But the irrational creation claims a brief notice from us, for this too shall feel the precious comprehensiveness of the Redeemer's rule. He it is who cares for all which his hand has made;

> "Thou numberest pour alike their glorious tide
> To light up worlds or wake an insect's mirth."

and the very fact of their long subjugation to corruption only goes to prove the reasonableness of their ultimate emancipation. But the dominion of Christ will be manifested, in regard to the brute creation, with especial reference to the original promise of their subjection to man. For though a portion of them have indeed been made the victims of his tyrant will, a large portion have bid defiance to his authority. It is a most interesting thought for the Christian to consider that the blessings of peace and goodwill will embrace even the animals, and that in this the empire of man will be resumed and consolidated. Take for example Isaiah xi., in which it is stated by the

prophet, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Then we shall realize the Psalmist's words: "Thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Well is this happy time called the time of restitution, whether for them or for us. Creation has been subject to sixty centuries of abuse. The gracious God who made all things well, and intended all things for happiness, has seen his divine purposes frustrated. Man has perverted and misapplied everything which he has touched. He has pressed the inanimate creation into the service of rebellion, and has made the animate creation to suffer, while a vast part of this latter has itself resisted his control. But when Christ comes disorder shall yield to order, and as

man moment will see the example of obedience, the very creatures will yield a willing and universal subjection.

2. We must hasten on to another point in the accomplishment of this kingdom, and that is Christ's dominion over death and the grave. Here indeed the divine authority of the Son of man will be displayed, by his own statement of it. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." John v. 28. Now if we consider what it is to restore and reanimate the scattered dust of the body, we shall understand something of the vastness of the Redeemer's kingdom in this point of view. The very dust of the earth shall be animated by the breath of him who is emphatically called the Life. What is this but omnipotence? To quicken the dead, and call those things which be not as though they were,—this is the prerogative of God alone, and yet it will be exercised by the Son of man. Not only nature in existence, but things which exist not will be subjected to his empire. True, these shall be last that yield, for "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;" but the grave must give up its prey, and the dead shall rise. It is probable indeed but the authority of Christ will be exhibited in this respect during the millennium,—that there shall be very little

death during its continuance, for the years of the patriarchs were not far short of this time, and it is supposable that, except for some circumstance demanding it, the death of any who live on the earth during that season of joy will be incompatible with its character.

Such then is the vastness of Christ's kingdom considered in its comprehensiveness. It has necessarily occupied a large space in our subject, as indeed it is the principal topic. Let us pass on to the power of expansion which this kingdom will exhibit.

II. And here I confess that we are approaching an obscure portion of our subject. The truth is stated in plain words; the exposition of it as regards its manner and nature is very difficult. Our first text gives us this statement: "Of the *increase* of his government there shall be no end,—to order it—and to establish it—from henceforth even for ever." It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a continual enlargement of the spiritual authority of Christ is intended here. The position attributed to Him, moreover, (on the throne of David,) strengthens the inference that this increase refers to millennial times. The time is past when general or loose interpretations of the expressions of prophecy would satisfy an enquiring mind; and to limit, therefore, this text to the mere gradual

spread of the Gospel from the ascension of Jesus to his second advent will not meet its difficulties. And yet most of our commentators do in effect so explain it. Perhaps they were afraid of speculations, and if so, they were wise. Yet they leave a feeling of dissatisfaction on the mind. It is plainly stated that of the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom there was to be no end; not only perpetuity, but increase, therefore, was to be its distinguishing characteristic. But how, and when? Without venturing on the interminable plains of conjecture, let me endeavour, though with some fear, to propose a solution.

It is now a commonly-received opinion that a great work of conversion will take place during the millennial reign. The state of the world at the coming of Christ will not be one of submission to Him. The Jews will be yet an unconverted nation as well as the greater part of the heathen. The fulfilment of the first text, therefore, may be at once explained *relatively* by the advancement of the millennial empire, in that the conversion of the Jews and, through their missionary exertions, that of the heathen also, will during that period take place. Hence the glory of Christ as a King will proceed from Jerusalem, thus accomplishing the declaration in Isaiah lx. 12: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea,

these nations shall be utterly wasted." And if, as some have thought, the regenerated state of the earth is to be an everlasting one, fulfilling the original idea of a habitation for man and a nursery for heaven, then indeed the enlargement of Messiah's kingdom would know no end, because the generations of its inhabitants would be perpetually on the increase. But, not to go so far as this, may it not be affirmed that, if the words of the text apply exclusively to the mediatorial kingdom, and if this kingdom must one day be merged in the universal empire of JEHOVAH, they are nevertheless fulfilled in this *relative* aspect upon the principle, that the increase of any power must be limited by the extent of the objects upon which it is to be exercised. Thus we should say, that whatever is absolute is unlimited, though in reality it does not extend beyond the circle of those things over which it prevails.

But the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ is in another aspect *absolutely* true. For this kingdom being not more external than it is spiritual and internal, is capable of increasing advancement in proportion to the expanding faculties, knowledge, and grace of its subjects. Nor let this be thought a refinement of ingenuity. The growth of the spiritual man is as much an evidence and subject of dominion as the growth of the spiritual body,

the Church. Advancement is a necessary accompaniment of life, above all, of the life of mind and spirit. How vast will be the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ then in this respect. We can conceive some little of what is unknown in the secrets of science and nature; but how much remains to be understood of Him who is the ineffable Infinite! Yet as the knowledge and power of each member of the heavenly kingdom enlarges, in that degree the kingdom itself will increase. Truly it is a wonderful though intelligible conception how the dominion of Christ will be extended by the individual progress of his people. For in their very employments there will be a development of his authority; and though we can form but little notion of the nature of those employments, nor of the relations in which the redeemed themselves shall stand towards each other, it is sufficiently probably that order, activity, and government will be found in the condition of each rank and mind. It would be easy to imagine and to speculate, to people some of those myriads of worlds which exhaust alike the powers of the telescope and the mind; but we must content ourselves with what glimpses we can obtain on a subject far too obscure in its shadowy distance than it is given to us to discern.

III. We now come, however, to a matter on

which we may speak with greater confidence because we are favoured with greater light. Our two texts,—the one pointing to a human throne, and the other indicating an authority subordinate to that which confers it, lead us to enquire in what capacity this vast kingdom will be administered by Him who is to be placed over it.

I say we are favoured with greater light upon this point than upon some of the details of the kingdom itself; and in confirmation of this I must direct your attention to that remarkable passage in Dan. vii. 13, 14, which seems to be a prophetic exposition of the passage from Isaiah, rather than a distinct prophecy. In that place, then, we read, "I saw in the night visions; and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came unto the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him: and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This clear and remarkable prophecy harmonizes wonderfully with the predictions concerning Christ in Psalm ii. and Zechariah vi. 12, 13,—the former speaking of his general royalty, the latter of his royalty in connection with Jerusalem and the

Church. It is confirmed further by what our Lord has said concerning Himself in various parables, but more especially in John v. 22, 27: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." In addition to this we may bring forward the language of St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 24, and the testimony is complete. And what is the force of all this? It is to the effect that this kingdom of Emmanuel will be administered by Him as man. Shall we ask why or how this was to be? To answer this, we must penetrate into counsels that are yet shut up in the bosom of the supreme God. We may approach to certain assignable proprieties in the execution of this plan, particularly as connected with man's fall. We may say with Archbishop Anselm, "I see that the man whom we seek as qualified to be our Mediator must be of this description:—He must not die of necessity because He must be omnipotent, nor of debt because He must not be a sinner; and yet He must die voluntarily because it was necessary that He should do so as Mediator. As it is necessary that man should satisfy for the sin of man, therefore none could make satisfaction but he who was properly man, Adam himself, or one of his race." We may perhaps go further, and speculate

upon the wisdom and mercy of God in coming down so far to the apprehension of the creature as to enable it to realize his divine sympathy and presence. But what is this after all? It is dealing with results, not purposes. Yet may we learn from hence one great, and, to us, most blessed truth, that whatever may be the relative bearings of the mediatorial kingdom upon other beings or other worlds, the administration of this vast and sublime empire is confided to a man. God "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, *because* he is the Son of man." Herein lies not only the force of the Apostle's argument, but the glorious blessedness of our privileges as believers. By this it is that we are made to sit in heavenly places, and are raised into a state of co-peerage with the hierarchy of heaven. Let us throw together, therefore, in brief the results of this dispensation, and see what will flow to us from such vast and gracious premises. Administered as the government of this kingdom will be by the Son of man, its constitution will be peculiar, inasmuch as it will include the recovery and extension of dominion to man. Under this view there are three features presenting themselves as results.

The first is, that the Church will ever be a select body under Christ. Even when the mediatorial kingdom is resigned, and the whole body is pre-

sented to God, it must ever remain in a peculiar association with Him, such as belongs to no other part of creation. For in that the union of God with man in the person of Emmanuel is perpetual, the relationship which was introduced by that act of union must abide for ever. As Christ can never cease to be God and man, so man can never cease to claim a nearness and affinity with his God which completely insulates him from all other creatures. This will be the everlasting monument of his redemption, at once the remembrancer of his mercies and the reminder of his debt.

Again, we may observe, that by the provisions of this kingdom the saints themselves are to be advanced in authority: they are to be assessors with Christ. Nor are the intimations connected with this point in our subject few nor obscure. "The saints," Daniel was told, "shall possess the kingdom for ever." "Ye also," said Jesus to his apostles, "shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "Know ye not," asks Paul of the Corinthians, "that we shall judge angels?" this is a direct result of the human administration of the mediatorial kingdom.

The third result of this, however, will be the exceeding glory of the saints,—a glory in some respects not only distinguishable from that of all other creatures, but in great measure superior to

it. Not only does St. Paul speak of it as being a weight of glory exceeding and eternal, but the very picture which the prisoner of Patmos saw of the New Jerusalem descending from above presents us with a foretaste of its greatness, such as can only be expressed by the language which the former apostle used: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Listen to a few words concerning it. "He —shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." The rest of the description—the wall of jasper, the city of gold, the foundations garnished with precious stones, the gates of pearl, and God, the light of the whole—is familiar to you. But whatever all this may typify, who cannot see that it is glory such as transcends all human expectation, and therefore defies all human description?

And now, therefore, to bring these remarks to a conclusion, it only remains for me to offer one or two practical inferences, which may possibly have already suggested themselves to your minds. Our subject has been a grand one,—too lofty for anything like a worthy description,—too extensive for more than the most superficial comments.

How solemn will be our realization of it! There is not a soul upon this earth which will not eventually come within the comprehension of this vast and magnificent kingdom. But under what relation? What, for example, will be the relation which *you* will bear to the sceptre of Jesus Christ? Believe me, if you would know what shall be your place in the empire without, you must look to the nature of the empire within. The kingdom of God is within you. If Christ is to be your Sovereign in bliss, He must reign over your affections now; and this is your only warrant for expecting a part in the glory of the coming kingdom. Amid the things which are put in subjection to Him then, are your hearts to be found among the number? Have you submitted your wills, your tastes, your affections to his heavenly discipline? Remember that nothing can escape his rule, not even the hearts of his enemies; for though they will not be governed by love, the law of terror will subdue them. Oh, the wretchedness of not being able to love,—to feel the power and admire the loveliness of unsullied goodness without the grace to love it. What will this be but to realize that awful description of the outer state?—"there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Banish, then, from your minds the notion that there is no connection between the present state of your hearts and your

future relation to the sceptre of Jesus. There is a secret chain of union which passes from the throne of the Son of God into the heart of every true member of his body. This chain is the constraint of love: by it the captive heart is bound to the service of its redeeming Lord: by it the sinner is drawn to an unfeigned surrender of himself as a whole sacrifice. Not one sin, not one passion, not one affection, is admitted to an exemption. I say not that this is all done without a struggle, or that a victory so vast is achieved without suffering, but He who bruises not the broken reed, nor quenches the smoking flax, carries on the work till He sends forth judgment unto victory. Estimate, then, if you will, your future place in the kingdom of Christ. It is already written upon your hearts. Is Christ your Sovereign now? Does his will preside over yours? Is there one thing which you withhold from his rightful demand? Oh, then you are already of the number of his sealed ones; already for you the place in his triumphant advent is prepared. But if not,—if the world or even one sin reigns in your heart, what then? Let me use the language of gracious entreaty: "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little." Wherefore defy a power which neither men nor devils can resist, which will comprehend

in its vastness all created things, and which will penetrate into the very thoughts and spiritual invisibilities of the world to come? Neither is the time for this supremacy far distant; all things are preparing for it: the very risings of Antichrist, the harlot of Babylon and the monster of infidelity, the surely approaching conflict of the powers of earth, the unusual activity of Satan, the perplexities of the human mind as to what is common truth, the startling revelations of sin, and the extent of hypocrisy,—these point out to the thoughtful Christian that the time of his Master's advent and of his own deliverance is nigh at hand. Whether ten, twenty, thirty years, are to elapse ere this desire of his heart shall be fulfilled it matters little. When we see the beginning of the end we may well wait with patience. Let us, therefore, watch and be sober. Let us keep our hearts and our garments: let us not fear the raging of the seas, nor the noise of the people. Greater is He that is with us than he that is in the world. And whether called upon to suffer for the name of Jesus, or kept in peace and privacy till his appearing, we shall pass the time of our sojourning here in hope of the glory that is to be revealed; and when it does come, we shall be for ever with the Lord.

LECTURE XII.

CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

BY THE

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REVELATION XXII. 20.

"*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*"

THE subject which I am to bring before you to night as the concluding lecture is, "Christ the desire of all nations." The text is the language of the Apostle John. Our blessed Saviour had just declared the nearness of his coming; He which testifieth the things in this book said, "Surely I come quickly," to which the Apostle replied, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." This sermon might easily have been made a summary as it

were of the other lectures which have been already delivered, but I think that merely giving the substance of those subjects over again would be less profitable for you than the taking rather a different course. I propose, therefore, to night endeavouring to speak to you simply upon the one topic already announced,—"Christ the desire of all nations." My wish will be to confine your attention to that one topic, not with a view of throwing additional light upon any particular portion of unfulfilled prophecy, but rather with the object of practically applying the subject in the hope that by God's blessing it may stir us all up to increased exertion in the service of the Lord,—to increased watchfulness for his appearing, and at the same time be the means of affording increased comfort to the children of God.

I feel more and more the great importance of studying the subject before us,—I mean the whole subject of unfulfilled prophecy. Everything must be important which draws out our minds to contemplate that great event,—great not only in all the glorious circumstances which immediately attend the Advent, but great as it must be in its results to every one of us. I would ask you, therefore, to lift up your hearts, that I may be enabled to speak to you usefully, that the words spoken may not return void, but may be blessed

to the glory of God and edification of souls for Jesus Christ's sake.

In opening up the subject, I propose, first, to point out *the Person called for*, and to shew *why* He should be called for; and secondly, I hope to dwell upon *the character of the persons who will use the prayer*.

The text itself declares the person to be Christ: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." He is, and ever has been, the desire of man. Since the fall of our first parents, men have been prostrate, weak, ignorant, suffering in body and mind; or to use the words of this book of Revelation, they have been, and still are, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The consequence of this was, that man sighed for a restitution to that condition which he enjoyed before the fall; therefore the whole of the dispensation since the fall of man to the present hour has been described in Scripture as a state of "groaning." Man, in consequence of this desire, has himself formed many devices for obtaining that happiness which was his lot before the fall, and for restoration to the favour of God; but where man has sought this of himself, he has invariably failed of success. God himself has been pleased to reveal to us that there is and can be but one way of restoration, and that is through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. God

children have an earnest of this restitution now,—they have a pledge of it; they have present enjoyments, they have present feelings, which are foretastes of those future joys which shall be theirs hereafter. At the same time we must remember, that the period for the full enjoyment of God's favour again is reserved until the time of the end,—until that period when the touching prayer of our blessed Lord will be fulfilled, when we all shall be one, and we shall see Him in his glory. It is to that period that the text is here referring: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The text *must* have reference to the second coming, for Christ has been once, and now the Apostle is seeking for Him to come again: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Let us now proceed to examine why the coming of the Lord should be so earnestly desired. In the first place, *He will bring with him all things new.* We know that at the time of the creation of the world, when all was finished, and God saw every thing that he had made, he pronounced it to be very good; but after the fall everything became very bad; consequently we find in the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles this exhortation: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached

unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." It will be at that time, and not until that time, that men with one accord will rejoice together, and in the language of the Psalmist exclaim, "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."

It is at the time of the Advent that *corruption will put on incorruption.* This statement refers to many different things; for instance, it concerns the *physical earth.* At the time of the fall, in consequence, indeed, of the fall, the beauty of the earth became changed; thus we read in the 18th verse of the 3rd chapter of the book of Genesis: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." We are led, however, to expect that the earth will not always bring forth these thorns and thistles, but when this earth shall be changed, —when this corruptible nature shall put on incorruption, then "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

There are other changes also to which we may look forward. I allude to the *state of the human body,* and the condition into which it will be

changed hereafter. St. Paul tells us in the 3rd chapter of his Epistle to the Philippians that men shall have their "vile bodies" changed, that they may be "fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Many, I doubt not, in this congregation, know full well what weakness of body is; there will be no weakness in our glorified state. Many there are among God's dear children who know too bitterly what the lusts of the flesh are, and what an hinderance they find in their body to the active service of God; but we are encouraged to look forward to that period when all these hinderances will be done away,—when Christ shall change this vile body, and make it like unto his own glorious body, even as we have had a representation on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Again, we *may look for changes in political bodies;* for when Christ shall take to himself his kingdom, all his subordinate officers will be just and righteous as himself; for at Christ's kingdom "a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment."

Thirdly, I may mention, it is at the time of the Advent that *Satan will be bound.* He is the present author of all our woes. We are told in Rev. xx. that the angel coming down from heaven "shall lay hold

on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and he shall be bound a thousand years, and he shall be cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, and a seal shall be set upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." It is true, as was remarked to us in a former Lecture, that we must expect to find a certain measure of sin during the millennium, but we must be very careful lest we indulge too much in the common language of the world, and assign all sin to Satan: we should recollect the carnal mind is enmity against God; and that the reason why there will be so little sin during the millennium amongst those who do not form a portion of the Church of the first-born, is, that he who was able most actively to work upon the corrupt heart of man, is bound.

Again, *abiding peace will then be established,* and no wonder, for, as we have just seen, the God of this world will be then dethroned: then it is that we shall see the realization of that hope which many thought the Great Exhibition typified. I mean perfect peace and harmony amongst all nations. Man attempted to attain this by means of his own invention, irrespective of the direct revealed promises of God, and what has been the result? Why, that the boasted union and peace of 1851, the supposed basis of general peace on earth

and good-will amongst men, is followed in 1852 by proposals to increase our national defences to an amount exceeding any that has existed for five and thirty years. In the great millennial period we shall no longer require an exhibition of Bibles in various languages, for the Scripture leads us to expect at that time all shall be able to speak the same language; that whereas through the confusion of tongues at the time of the building of the tower of Babel, men could not understand each other: we are told by the prophet Zephaniah, that at the advent of the Lord, He "will turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."

At that time we shall not find an apostate Church, holding the bodies and souls of men in bondage, but the true Church will be made manifest in the full enjoyment of the liberty of the children of God. I speak advisedly when I refer to Papists holding souls and bodies in bondage. If any of you are anxious to trace out this subject for yourselves—that I may not occupy the time now by entering on this topic at length—I would suggest to you to read a work lately published by Mr. M'Ghee; it is called, *The Church of Rome: her present Moral Theology, Scriptural Instruction, and Canon Law.* It consists of extracts from documents which have been deposited in the li-

braries of our two great universities in England, and in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. The correctness of the matter is guaranteed by the imprimatur of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. This work shews how completely the Papist is bound both hand and foot, or, I may liberally say, both body and soul, in the chains of that iniquitous system.

But to return to the subject which is more immediately before us, I would remark that the Advent is a period for that which I may describe as *the great reunion.* In the first place, there will be *the reunion of body and soul.* To this the apostle refers in the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." It is at that time, and not till then, that we shall have that perfect happiness

which is our lot; for though at the time of death the spirit doubtless enters, not into rest only, but into a certain state of happiness, still that happiness is incomplete. There is greater happiness in store when body and soul shall be reunited. To this our Church refers in the Burial Service, when she speaks of our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul in the eternal and everlasting glory.

Then again, it is at the same period there will be *a great reunion of friends*. If you turn to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, the fourth chapter, you will find the Apostle exhorting that Church in these words, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

O what a blessed time that will be! What a happy reunion of friends! Doubtless there are many of us here who can look back upon the memory of those whom we have truly loved; we may look forward to seeing them once more; perhaps there is some parent here who has been deprived of a dear child, the delight of his eyes; only think then of being able to see that child again, and of being reunited to that child, *never* to part again! Perhaps there are husbands and wives, wives and husbands, they may in the same way look forward to that time for a blessed reunion. The Lord hasten the period!

Then again consider the case of the minister who has been labouring amongst his people, which labours he has had reason to believe have been blessed. He is able to look forward to a reunion of an infinitely larger congregation than ever gathered together within the walls of a temple upon earth. The Apostle refers to this in the 1st chapter of the Epistle to Colossians, he would desire to preach to every man "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

It would be well, my brethren, that ministers of the Gospel should all realize that scene. It would be well that they should keep their eye

fixed upon that blessed period when they shall stand before throne of the Lord, and hand up, one after another, of the congregation, and shew that this one has been brought out of darkness into light,—this one brought from a state of sin into a state of holiness and righteousness,—this one, who had been careless and indifferent, become filled with a prayerful and watchful anxiety about his soul! It will indeed be an ample reward to the faithful minister who may have been the honoured instrument of bringing his people into that condition. Thus the Apostle argues over and over again. He was deeply impressed with the great importance of the ministry. He knew his own happiness was concerned; so he exclaims in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Who can wonder, then, at Christians of all classes longing for this blessed period? Who can wonder at the Apostle so ardently desiring he might attain unto the resurrection, even to the resurrection of the just?

The amount of present knowledge which may exist in those who have gone hence concerning us who are still here upon earth, is left altogether amongst the secret things of God. I dare not

even venture to speak upon that subject; I dare not, myself, hazard an opinion as to what is known, or what is unknown, by those who have gone before; but of this we may be perfectly certain, that when the Lord shall come again we shall know each other. Heaven's gates will then be open; there will be a union, a full union and communion of saints; in that great day every true believer will be permitted to sit down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

But again, not only will there be a union between families and friends, but there will be *a reunion of the Church.* Although the Church is one body now, all who love the Lord Jesus belonging to that body, yet we cannot help feeling (I am sure I am speaking the sentiments of many), we cannot help feeling that there are sad and painful divisions amongst us now. It will not be so then; there will be no more jealousies, no more schisms, no more speaking harshly one towards another, as we too often observe now because there happens to be some high churchman upon this committee, or some low churchman on that committee, or some dissenters connected with this society or that; but there will be a general rejoicing, and a general acknowledgment of the sovereign grace and unbounded mercy of the Lord. Men will then with one accord unite in singing the praise and the

glory of God. Believers, whatever may be their differences or distinctions here, will then be one with each other, and one with Christ, and will take up the language which we read in the first chapter of this book, and cry aloud, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Again, there will be *full union with God*. There is a union now amongst His children; many of us are one with Christ, we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; but who is there amongst us that has not to complain that too often the light of God's countenance is now hidden from him? Aye, brethren, such is our present state; but it will not be so hereafter. There will be, in the great day, a fulness of knowledge, for we shall know him even as we are known; there will be a fulness of love, of harmony, and of peace, when the Apostle's prayer shall be answered, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

I think, then, we may speak of the state of the world at that time as being *a state of perfection*. Yes, a state of perfection. There may be some, perhaps, who would hesitate to use those words, from the consideration that the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation have rather reference to events subsequent to the millennium than pre-

viously to it, or during the millennial period; but still I cannot myself see that there can be an increase of happiness to that which is declared to be the portion of the Lord's people at his coming, when they shall be, themselves, for ever with the Lord. I believe that in that time there will be perfect love, and perfect love without perfect happiness could not exist; there will be perfect peace, and we know perfect peace could not be without perfect happiness; there will be perfect holiness among the Lord's people, holiness of thought, word and deed; there will be a perfection of joy, and we shall be partakers of those joys which are at God's right hand for evermore. I may say there will be perfect love without fear; perfect assurance without doubts; perfect peace within and without; perfect holiness, and therefore no sin; perfect joy without a sigh, God himself having condescended to wipe away all tears from our eyes. All this, then, appears to authorize us in speaking of Christ as "the desire of all nations."

We are now to enquire, in the next place, *Who are the persons that call? What are the characteristics of those persons who will be prepared to take up the language of this text, and say, "Come, Lord Jesus?"* The title of my subject says, "Christ is the desire of all nations;"—true, but *not of all persons.* We must not, I would just

remark in passing, assume as certain that the passage in which we find the words, "the desire of all nations," (Haggai ii.;)—"I will shake all nations, and *the desire of all nations* shall come;"—we must not take for granted, I say, that that passage refers to Christ. There are very great doubts as to the correctness of that interpretation. Those who are Hebrew scholars seem to feel very strongly that Christ *may* be the person represented, though this view is not to be assumed for certain. It is for that reason I have chosen the text you have heard in preference to the one just mentioned from Haggai.

Nevertheless, Christ is the desire of all nations; the Jews will then receive Him with joy, as we find prophecied in the 25th chapter of Isaiah: "It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." No wonder that they will all rejoice in that salvation, for they will see the king in his beauty, and they will acknowledge Him who was born king of the Jews—the once rejected Jesus, as their own rightful Messiah King.

The Gentiles will then acknowledge Him as their desire; for we are told, "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over *all people*, and the vail that is spread over *all nations*."

We are taught that there will be a new covenant, and that it will not be necessary for every man to teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord;" for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest. Thus then both the Jew and the Gentile are looking forward to the coming of the Lord. We know that it will be at that time that the greatest blessings will be vouchsafed to the world at large, that is at the time of the restoration of the Jews, when they shall acknowledge Christ, and indeed these blessings will probably come on the world by their instrumentality, as we are told in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: "If the casting away of the Jews be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Thus, then, if we take the two great divisions of the world, the Jew and the Gentile, we have a right to speak of Christ as "the desire of all nations."

But if we look at the question in a personal and individual light—and that is the most practical way for you and for me to examine the subject—I say, that those only will be able to use this prayer *who have themselves been called of God;* who have been effectually called by the grace of God, and have themselves called upon the name of the Lord. Of these the prophet Joel declares, "the Lord will deliver them." But observe the real meaning of that

expression in the last verse of the second chapter, "whosoever shall call on the name of Lord shall be delivered." This calling means something more than a cry of fear; it implies a knowledge of God in Christ; it implies faith in Him, it signifies a desire towards Him; it implies a dependence upon Him, and a willing obedience to Him. All these ideas are included in calling on the name of the Lord; and who will thus call upon the Lord but he who has been first called by the Lord?—he, and he alone, knows that there is joy for every true believer—he, and he alone, experiences that joy now, believing his present joy to be a foretaste of that everlasting blessedness which shall be hereafter. It is a character such as this who will exclaim, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" "come quickly!" In short, *it is those who have their conversation in heaven*, or as the word more properly implies, have their *citizenship* in heaven,—it is they of whom the Apostle speaks in the Epistle to the Philippians, saying, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

My brethren, all who call themselves Christians, do not and cannot thus speak of their coming Lord; all who are called Christians are not really the Lord's freemen. We know such is not the case; we know that there are numbers who are

like the five foolish virgins—they carry their lamps of profession, but the oil of divine grace is not in them. Their profession is good, their practice is bad; they talk of heaven, they live for hell.

Again: we shall find that *those who have suffered for Christ* here, will use the words of the text. The Apostle Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, speaks of those who are sufferers with Christ also reigning with Him. He knew his own state; he knew what he had gone through. He knew what would be bestowed upon him hereafter; and therefore he wrote, "It is a faithful saying; for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." The Lord's people will be abused upon earth—they will be misunderstood—they will be persecuted and attacked; but, my brethren, hard to bear as these abuses and attacks may be, yet under them all we can think and recollect that Christ suffered, and in the midst of persecutions we are naturally encouraged to cry, "O come! even so, come, Lord Jesus!" We know that this suffering for his sake will soon pass away, and having suffered with the Lord, we shall share in his joys, which shall never pass away.

Let me add, *all watchful and faithful ministers of Christ will pray for the coming of Christ.* We have no knowledge now of the extent of the u

fulness of our ministry: I have alluded to ministers, but I would include District Visitors, Sunday-school Teachers, and all who are labouring for the salvation of souls: we cannot see at the present time the result of our labours. It pleases God from time to time to send us one of our flock who is anxious to speak about his never-dying soul. God thus condescends to cheer us by proving that we have not been unprofitably employing our time, —that we have not been spending our strength for nought. But it too often happens that a faithful preacher of the word continues his labours Sunday after Sunday and Year after Year without seeing any actual fruit of his ministry: but I have no more doubt that there *is* fruit than I can doubt any other declaration in the word of God. But we may not be permitted to see that fruit now. It is on that account that we are among the number who are most earnest in the cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" The Lord will shew us then the result of our labours, and we shall realize the words of Daniel, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever."

In a word, all may, all will use that prayer, *who love the Lord's appearing*. Let their rank in this life be what it may, if they are in Christ Jesus, they know what Christ Jesus has done— they know something of the preciousness of Christ

—they know something of what He endured, when, deserted of all his disciples—yea, when deserted of his Father and his God, He in the very bitterness of his soul cried, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" If then we remember his sufferings for us; if we know anything of what He endured in his anxiety to save us, I ask, who is that man that does not desire to see that Saviour no longer suffering but rejoicing—to see Him no longer in a state of humiliation but in a condition of triumph—to see Him not with a visage marred but with his glorified body? who is that man, in his desire for these things, who will not cry, "O come, Lord Jesus, come quickly?" It is then you will receive the crown of glory which fadeth not away.

Brethren, I have now endeavoured to give you a general sketch of the subject before us, "Christ the desire of all nations." I have attempted to shew you why He should be desired, and the character of those who are likely to desire Him: I have yet to apply the subject practically. I would ask you then *not to be listeners for others, but to be listeners for yourselves.* I want each of you to look at the subject as bearing personally upon the state of your own soul; I put, therefore, the question to you to-night, Can you and do you pray for the coming of the Lord? Do you pray,

I ask, for the coming of the Lord? Brethren, there may be many in this congregation who say they are afraid—who dare not pray for the Advent. Why not? There are a number of persons who assert that unfulfilled prophecy is not a practical subject,—who say it is a foolish theory, a carnal doctrine, and that it calls men away from the active duties of life. I ask them whether they bring that same accusation against the prayer of our blessed Lord, who has taught us to say, "Thy kingdom come?" What is the meaning of these words, "Thy kingdom come?" can they refer merely to a dispensation of grace? Why the dispensation of grace came before our Lord taught that prayer; for surely when He himself came, the Gospel came by Jesus Christ. There can be no doubt that the words have reference to that great period to which the whole course of these Lectures has directed your attention—to that blessed time when, and when alone, the will of God will be done upon earth as it is now done in heaven: therefore I put the question to you, knowing its practical importance,—can you, or can you not pray, "Thy kingdom come?" An unwillingness to use this prayer, an unwillingness to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly amongst us!" is a presumptive proof of personal ungodliness; for a man who has not faith in Christ is ungodly,—a man whose heart is not re-

newed by the Holy Spirit is ungodly,—a man who does not look for Christ is ungodly: I repeat, that an unwillingness to use this prayer is a strong proof of ungodliness. Many may say, "I am not willing to use this prayer, for I know I am not decided enough in my religion to be able to use it." Not decided enough in your religion!—how, then, came you to decide upon entering this church without deciding on calling upon the Lord? What *is* your state then?—You are either decided for the devil, or you are lukewarm towards your God; but remember what the Scripture saith, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." There is no term too strong—no expression too pointed, for making known God's hatred of indecision in a professor. It will not do to tamper with this question—it will not do to cut down God's truth to make it suit our inclination. God is not mocked; and he who thinks he may put on that chameleon sort of Christianity, which shall be one colour to-day and another colour to-morrow, will be rejected of the Lord. An undecided man!—can there be present such a trifler with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—blood shed for that man's soul that he might be one with Christ, and be a partaker with Him of the joys of heaven! if there be such a person present, I implore him for the

salvation of his soul, for the glory of his Saviour, to be decided at once, and let his resolution be now, "I *will* serve the Lord." Remember, my brethren, that whether you are praying for Christ's coming or not, Christ *will* come. You know well it is not in your power to prolong life or to delay death for a single hour, and depend upon it you cannot delay the coming of the Lord Jesus a single minute. He *will* come, and how fearful is the statement of his wrath, at the time of his coming, to those that know not God! We are told in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire he will take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

Perhaps there are some here who would tell me that they will not utter this prayer for the coming of the Lord, but that nevertheless they have no fear of death, they have no fear of the Lord's coming. Let me earnestly caution such against any false security, for the day of the Lord's coming is a terrible day to those who have been deceiving themselves. Look at the fifth chapter of the prophecies of Amos,

the 18th and 20th verses, and while we rejoice to think that Christ is the desire of all nations—of all the Lord's people, yet the prophet gives this warning to the ungodly, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord:"—that *desire* the day of the Lord; why, that is a step farther than the case of the parties to whom I was just now referring: I was speaking of those who did not dare use the prayer, but still affirmed they had no fear of the coming of the Lord; but here is the case of those who not only have not that fear, but profess to *desire* that day, "Woe unto you that *desire* the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" Beware then of self-deception; beware of any false security! Brethren, what proof have you of *your* safety? what is the foundation upon which you build your hope? what is the reason that you have no fear of the Lord's coming, though you pray not for it? Every really Christian man must have a process going on within him—that process which the Scripture describes as a mortification, a crucifixion of the lusts of the flesh. This process may be compared to that of the Israelites of old who drove out the Canaanites little by little; there is a continual inward working going on in the heart of the Christian,

whereby he is expelling gradually the works of the flesh. There must not only be a faith in Christ but there must be a working of the Holy Spirit within us: it is this which will make us fit for the enjoyment of God. It is not enough that a man with a sanctified air shall cry, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" while he has no desire to live the life of the righteous. There are no Balaams in heaven. I appeal to any man of business here—any man "who rises early and late takes rest," who centres his best attention in his fee book or day book instead of God's book, whose whole thought is in business with man, and who transacts no business with God; who fully understands political economy, and knows nothing of Divine economy. I entreat you not to be careless: talk not of being without fear at the coming of the Lord; you ought to fear, except you have first sought the kingdom of God and his righteousness; seek that first and God will take care of the rest. In short, I would say to you all, if on self-examination you believe you are still in an unconverted state, you have reason to fear, for "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

I hope and believe that our gathering together this night for meditation on this solemn subject has not been confined to mere professors, to the

self-deceived, or to those who dare not look for the Lord's coming. Suffer me to give a word of warning to you who are real Christians also. I would entreat you to adopt the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus!" It is meet and right so to do.

But while this is the subject matter of your prayer, let your position be a *waiting position*, learn to wait *patiently* for the coming of the Lord: the prophet tells us that He that is to come will come and will not tarry.

But at the same time I would urge you to wait *attentively*, that is, let your ears catch, as it were, the faintest sound of the footsteps of your returning Lord. There are persons who say, "I have no desire to know what is going on in the world." Why brethren, we ought to know; for the Lord will ask, "Have you not discerned the signs of the times?" We are bound to know what is going on in the world. Nothing happens without God's permission, and there are signs at this present period which ought to make us pause and reflect, and ask if these be *the signs* referred to in the word of God. I dare not dogmatize on such a subject. Remarkable events have happened in years gone by, and some did at once put their finger upon them and say, these are the signs of the Advent, and these conclusions have proved to be fallacious. But this I do say, signs are promised; and it is our part to

look, and consider, and with humility pray for the Lord's teaching, lest that great event come upon any of us like a thief in the night. There ought to be amongst Christians no slumbering; there ought to be no last accounts to make up; all should be ready, that when our Great Master shall come we may be ready to give up the account of our stewardship. Would that you and I were more anxious to know how we are standing before the Lord! Would that you and I were more zealous for his glory! If we were keeping our eye more and more upon the Lord Jesus, looking and longing for his appearing, there would be found in every one of us a gradual diminution of worldliness and a corresponding increase of spiritual-mindedness, a more rapid ripening for the immediate presence of our Lord and Saviour.

And now, before dismissing this assembly, I should like to say just one word *to my poorer brethren* who are present.—My friends, this course of Lectures, I trust, has been generally understood by you all. It is possible that one or two of them may have been expressed in language which may have failed to be as plain as we could desire; but looking back at the whole course, I am sure you have had much of God's truth plainly and forcibly set before you. The subject is calculated to be most encouraging to you. Many of you are

called upon to endure present hardships and privations, but comfort yourselves with the hopes that have been set before you. Scripture teaches us that sinners are cleansed by the blood of Christ from all their guilt. God has made no distinction of persons: those who are simple believers in Him will be raised to be with Him; they will dwell in his immediate presence; they will share their Saviour's joys at his coming. If you are believers these joys shall be yours.

God grant that these reflections may produce an increase of contentment under your many trials, and that you and all Christian friends here met together may be led to an earnest watchfulness for the return of the Saviour; and that by God's grace working in you, you may have cause to join with all the Lord's people in the prayer, "O come, Lord Jesus; come quickly!"

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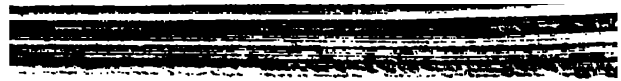

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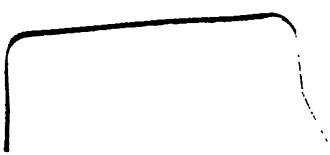
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